

Religious Diversity and Teacher Education: Experiences and Perspectives of
Muslim Women as Teacher Candidates in Pre-service Programs

Punita Lumb, B.A. (Hons), B.Ed.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate
Studies in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University,
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

This qualitative research project explores the insights of Muslim women as teacher candidates completing pre-service programs in Ontario. Ontario schools cater to students from many ethnic, cultural and religious groups, including a sizable Muslim population. Muslims make up 4.6% of Ontario's population with the highest concentration of Muslims in the GTA (Statistics Canada, 2011). The Muslim population in Ontario is of a significant enough number that, in a post 9/11 world, it has prompted discussion of how to integrate Muslim populations in Canada. In this research, I explore how Islamophobic sentiment is experienced in Ontario-based teacher education programs. I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF) to analyse and deconstruct experiences of female Muslim teacher candidates in pre-service programs. I discuss how Muslims are a racialized group that experience racism as discussed by critical race literature; however, there is a marked difference between how Muslim men and women experience gendered Islamophobia. By using in-depth research-based interviews, I explore how Muslim women perceived diversity, education, accommodations and Islamophobia in pre-service programs. This study adds to the current literature on critical race theory and anti-racist practices in education. Furthermore, this study adds to the voice of Muslim women in the discussion of diversity and inclusivity in educational institutions.

Acknowledgements

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela

This work is dedicated to my children who are my inspiration. They are the driving force behind my work for social justice in education. The desire to see my children educated in a just and equitable system pushed me through the past few strenuous years. I also have to acknowledge their patience with me during the many nights I sat with my laptop at dinner time! Of course, my husband’s patience also has to be acknowledged. *Thank you guys, you’re all so awesome!*

Additionally, this work is dedicated to my parents, Lajpat Rai and Rajindra Lumb. They always believed in me even when I thought I couldn’t accomplish this project. *Thank you mom and dad, I am so blessed to have your unwavering faith and support in my life.*

I also have to acknowledge Dr. Dolana Mogadime. Dr. Dolana Mogadime is so much more than a supervisor. Her patience, advice and encouragement during this journey have been invaluable. *Thank you Dolana for helping me achieve more than I thought I could!*

Finally, I want to thank my review committee, Dr. Julian Kitchen and Dr. Roger Saul. I am grateful for their time, positive comments and feedback. *Thank you Dr. Kitchen and Dr. Saul. Your interest in the research, and your conversations with me were very encouraging.*

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CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

This project is a qualitative study of Muslim women's experiences in teacher education programs. I chose female Muslim teacher candidates for their perspectives on how B.Ed. programs prepare teachers to address religious diversity and, more specifically, how the participants viewed their progress through the program as visible Muslim women. Through in-depth research interviews, I apply Essed's (2001) work on "gendered racism" to examine how tropes about Muslim women impact them in educational institutions. In addition to hearing the perspectives of the participants, I employ Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF) to deconstruct their experiences and place them in the larger context of social hierarchies. Deconstructing various events makes different types of oppressions identifiable and, therefore, open to specific critique from socially just perspectives. Furthermore, the CRT framework will help identify practices in teacher education that work to empower marginalized groups.

Critical Race Theory places race at the center of the discussion, as well as recognizing other intersecting factors that work to create various forms of oppression (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). As a form of racism, however, Islamophobia is a contested topic in academia (Lopez, 2011). This study begins by defining how race is used and how Islamophobia, essentially a religious intolerance, works as a subcategory of CRT. Definitions of "race" vary slightly in dictionaries and are quite vague. Examples include race as a "category of shared physical traits" or race as a "category of shared habits" ("race", 2013). Race is not a scientific or biological term, but rather a term used to categorize people by various commonalities (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998; Jhally,

1997). Building on Hall's discussion in Jhally's (1997) "Race: A Floating Signifier", race in this study is understood as socially constructed by discursive language where people use various signifiers (which change in time and context) to read each other's bodies. Racism is the use of these categories to empower some groups over others from everyday interactions to political and economic relations. So what are the signifiers or commonalities that people use to see Muslims as a race? Islamophobia can fit in as a category of racism in two ways. First, historically, religion was always used as a signifier to define race (Jhally, 1997; Meer, 2013). Secondly, Muslims have become racialized to a point where Muslim identity is not only defined by religious affiliation (a voluntary trait), but by ethnic origin and Arab/South Asian skin colour (involuntary traits) (Lopez, 2011). Understanding this idea helps explain why Sikh and Hindu people have also been subject to Islamophobic violence because Islamophobes see brown skin colour as an association with Muslim identity (Hoang, 2011). In light of this understanding, Islamophobia can very easily fit into the model of CRT and CRF.

CRT provides the tools and critical language to discuss encounters that work to oppress marginalized groups of people. CRF further explores how race (racism) and gender (genderism) intersect to create a different experience for women (Essed, 1991; Wing, 1997). CRT is an important tool for conceptualizing the Muslim experience. Muslim identity is socially constructed and assigned certain values or undesirable traits. Muslims are subjected to similar social processes of inequity like other racialized groups (Nagra, 2011). Furthermore, Muslim women experience a different type of racism than Muslim men. Muslim women are associated with a different set of stereotypes that portray them as submissive or voiceless, while Muslim men are seen as aggressors or

potential terrorists. Many of the tropes surrounding Muslim women have created a sense of urgency in the West to save the Muslim woman amidst the War on Terror (Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010).

I chose to concentrate on teacher education because it is a site where candidates build on their prior knowledge and understanding to form a teacher identity. At the same time, teacher education programs can also be a site where racist or prejudiced ideas are reaffirmed or disrupted before a teacher completes their credentials and enters a diverse Ontario classroom. The practices in teacher education programs that work to *reaffirm or disrupt* racist ideologies are critical to the purposes of this study. I believe that racism in the classroom does more than uphold existing racial hierarchies; racism undermines the self-worth and spirit of an individual (Subedi, 2006). Given the prevalence of Islamophobia in Western culture, understanding the Muslim experience in teacher education can point out inclusive practices all teachers can use to combat this specific type of racism. In addition, we can look for practices that create fair and equitable classrooms for students of all faiths.

Fair and equitable practices in teacher education create a safe place for candidates to create a teacher identity that nurtures citizenship inclusive of diversity. The Ontario College of Teachers has specific “Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession”. One of these standards, “Commitment to Students and Student Learning,” states that “members facilitate the development of students as contributing citizens of Canadian society” (OCT, 2012). A contributing citizen of Canadian society may be many things; however, according to Ontario’s social studies curriculum, a good citizen is informed and behaves responsibly in a diverse and global setting (Ministry of Education, 2004). At the

same time, defining a good Canadian citizen can be problematic when people have different views on *who* is included as Canadian. Related to this problem of identifying “good” Canadian citizens is how the Ontario social studies curriculum treats the Canadian subject in an exclusive manner (Richardson, 2002). For example, Richardson (2002) writes of his experiences with Aboriginal students; “Why should they enter into a dialogue with a curriculum that refused to acknowledge their existence?” (pg. 4). This question points to the larger problem of various minority groups’ exclusion from the curriculum or inclusion in a superficially “positive” manner that works to reaffirm stereotypes. Exploring how Muslim teacher candidates experience religious diversity in B.Ed. programs is the first step to understanding how Muslims are included and/or excluded in the curriculum and educational institutions.

In the rest of this chapter, I discuss the background of the problem, purpose and importance of this study, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. I also provide a list of definitions for terms pertinent to this thesis.

Background of the Problem

Ontario is home to many diverse cultures and religions, including Islam. Out of the entire population of visible minorities in Canada, 52% of them live in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2011). In terms of religious diversity, Muslims make up 4.6% of Ontario’s population. In fact, Muslims make up the largest portion of non-Christian religious groups in Canada at approximately 3% of the total population. The Canadian Muslim population is also growing at increased rates than other religious groups. By 2030, the Canadian Muslim population is expected to triple, reaching 2.7 million Muslims in Canada (Pew, 2011). Again, the majority of this population will remain in

major urban centres such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2011). Finally, the Canadian Muslim population is not a monolithic group. It is diverse in ethnic roots, immigration trends, language, and traditions (Nagra, 2011).

Said (1978) discusses and analyzes the Orientalist interest in Muslims. He points out that there has been ample literature written about Muslims, their faith, lifestyle, politics, and cultures. Walking into any bookstore, one will find many self-appointed experts on the strange and exotic Muslims (Said, 1978). There is, however, relatively little available literature with the Muslim voice as the subject (Said, 1978). The marginalization of Muslims in the social sphere has many ramifications for the educational sphere. In particular, Islamophobia impacts Muslims socially, at work and school (Khalema & Wannas-Jones, 2003). Islamophobia has even entered the homes of Muslims through media reports that repeatedly depict violent Muslims (Mogadime, Ramrattan Smith, & Scott, 2011). With the growing number of Muslim students in Ontario schools in the face of Islamophobia, a teacher must be equipped to address religious diversity in the classroom.

Religion plays an important part of identity construction for many Muslims (Subedi, 2006). Islam crosses national and ethnic borders; thus, many Muslims in the West who feel stigmatized turn to Islamic identity to create strong bonds in the community (Tinker & Smart 2012). Many aspects of Islam are visible or obvious during social interactions such as dress, prayer and dietary restrictions. Parts of religious identity may be negotiated by some according to context; however, it cannot be completely ignored in educational institutions. Exclusion is not the only issue in the classroom, as there is also the issue of racism. Islamophobia includes generalized

irrational statements against Islam and Muslims. When faced with Islamophobia, a core part of Muslim identity is being attacked. Attacks on Muslim identity do not have to be overt; they can be an accumulation of racial micro-aggressions that oppress Muslims (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Again, it is essential to examine the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates to further our understanding of Islamophobia and its impact within educational institutions.

In reviewing the literature, I found that resistance to implementing anti-racist methodologies in universities and schools still exists, despite research indicating the need for further inclusive practices in the classroom (Barrett, Solomon, & Singer, 2009; Daniel, 2009). I have categorized four general types of resistance or barriers to implementing anti-racist practices in teacher education:

1. student resistance to course material related to diversity,
2. faculty resistance,
3. lack of student predisposition to diversity,
4. and the restricted length of the B.Ed. program.

Research also points out various solutions to the aforementioned barriers that can be implemented in B.Ed. programs. I have outlined four general suggestions as follows:

1. self-reflection and exploration of whiteness,
2. creating diverse cohorts,
3. disrupting the process of propagating harmful hegemonic beliefs at the faculty level,
4. and deconstructing the hidden curriculum of B.Ed. programs.

The purpose of this study is to extend this area of research to include race, diversity and racism specific to a Muslim context within teacher education curriculum. This research will add to the body of literature that exists, as well as offer further insights on addressing religious diversity in teacher education programs.

The Statement of the Problem

As a researcher, I examine the experiences of Muslim women as teacher candidates in teacher education programs at universities in Ontario. Their experiences will offer insights into the needs of B.Ed. programs so that religious diversity can be addressed effectively. Muslim students must not be pushed to the fringes of society. Educators require training to handle sensitive issues concerning Muslim students in a way that keeps the dignity intact of all of those involved. How educators approach religious diversity is a main concern of this study.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study attempts to bring some female Muslim voices to the centre of the education field. This study focuses on the experiences of four Muslim women who are recent graduates of an Ontario-based B.Ed. program. Research based interviews are used as a liberating process to explore oppression, as well as offer participants the critical language and tools to discuss oppression (Okolie, 2005). This type of research is a mutual building of knowledge so that voices of the minority are truly heard as subjects of the research, rather than being objects spoken about (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interviewing the participants reveal experiences that can be explored by using CRT as a framework. Understanding Muslim teacher candidates' experiences will add to the academic literature of CRT, as well as the general topic of how to create inclusive

classrooms. This study will add to the growing Muslim voice in current literature on anti-racist practices in schools (Zine, 2004b).

Importance of the Study

In 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education released a report called “Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy”. This strategy was created to make “Ontario’s education system the most inclusive in the world” (p. 2). Ontario is recognized as having a growing diverse population. Under diversity, the strategy includes language, Aboriginal peoples, single parent families, same sex couples, newcomers, visible minorities and religion. Under all these categories, populations are increasing and placing a demand on educational institutions to create inclusive spaces for diversity (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 8). The Ministry, however, found only forty-three out of the seventy-two school boards in Ontario actually have an equity policy, and some are mere one page statements. Further, only twelve school boards reported having documentation related to religious accommodation, and only three were considered as comprehensive policies (p. 9). Thus, the strategy included “action items” that should have been implemented from years 2008-2012 by various agencies (e.g., the Ministry, school boards, and schools). Part of the Ministry’s action items for 2008-2009 was to “work with faculties of education and the Ontario College of Teachers to incorporate content pertaining to equity and inclusive education in pre-service and in-service teacher education programs and to increase access for members of underrepresented groups” (p. 20). In addition to the Ministry’s research, the Supreme Court of Canada also stated that racism is a social fact; this finding prompted the Ministry to further investigate the rise of Islamophobia and other forms of racism in our schools (p. 7). In light of the Ministry’s

initiatives, this study is an important and timely examination of present day pre-service teachers and the preparation they undergo to equip them for diversity in the classrooms.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on Muslim women's experiences as religious minorities in pre-service programs in Ontario. The data can be used to increase our understanding of specific needs for anti-racist training in the face of growing diversity in Ontario classrooms. The skills we teach candidates in the pre-service program are essential for deconstructing racist scenarios a teacher may find in the classroom. It is not within the scope of this study to define an exhaustive list of anti-racist practices to adopt in the classroom. Much of the literature available on anti-racist education points out anti-racist strategies cannot take effect until teachers understand their own racial selves first (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010). Coming to an awareness of personal racist beliefs is the initial step to combatting racism; thus, teacher education programs must first have the space for dialogue about such sensitive matters in an enriching, rather than marginalizing manner (Solomon, 1997). This study will focus on the voices and spaces for dialogue about religion and race.

Also, beyond the scope of this study is the creation of an ideal diversity course for the pre-service program to implement. What the study will do, however, is bring to light (through the responses of the participants) possible dialogues that can occur about diversity in reference to the Muslim reality in Ontario. Also, this study will not recommend one pre-service program in Ontario over another in terms of diversity training. Rating university B.Ed. programs is beyond the scope of this study and confidentiality of institutions and participants are respected throughout the study.

Definitions of Terms

In this section I define terms in relation to this study. A number of definitions have been taken from the “Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy” as the study revolves around promoting the strategies laid out by the Ministry of Education. The rest of the definitions are related to Muslim culture, CRT and anti-racist practice.

Abaya: a loose fitting, full length robe worn by some Muslim women (Abaya, 2014)

Anti-racist Education: Involves action-based strategies and critical discourse to address racism (Dei, 1996). Though there is no scientific basis for the concept of race, it is very much a social impact that results in negative effects on groups of people, especially those who are denied access to social power or privilege (Ghosh, 2008).

Critical Race Theory (CRT): brings race to the centre of research. CRT not only studies race, but also works to deconstruct racial hierarchies and transform existing relationships of race and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical Race Feminism (CRF): has its roots in CRT; however, unlike CRT, CRF brings gender with race to the centre of the theoretical framework used to examine experiences of women of colour (Berry, 2009).

Diversity: “The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 88).

Equity: “A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people.

Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences”

(Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 88).

Ethnicity: “Refers to a group of people bound by a sense of peoplehood based on shared cultural traits such as religion, ancestry, national origin, or language. All people can trace their roots to at least one ethnic background” (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998, p. 335).

Hidden Curriculum: a term from P. Jackson from 1968, refers to the “implicit messages to convey “appropriate” values, beliefs, and behaviours to children” (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998, p. 13).

Hijab: the traditional covering for the hair and neck worn by Muslim women (hijab, 2014)

Inclusive Education: “Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 90).

Islamophobia: “a hatred or fear of Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force” (Islamophobia, 2012)

Niqab: a veil for covering the hair and face except for the eyes that is worn by some Muslim women (Niqab, 2014)

Race: a term with no scientific or biological basis. It has been used historically to categorize people based on beliefs about their common ancestry and/or physical characteristics (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998, p. 337).

Racial Microaggression: unconscious and subtle forms of racism (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed towards people of colour (Solorzano, 2001).

Racial Macroaggression: overt and purposeful discrimination directed towards people of colour (Donovan, Galban, Grace, Bennett, & Felicie, n.d.).

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two contains the literature review which covers the following topics: education as a site of domination, theoretical lenses, CRT and anti-racist education, and education as a site of liberation. In exploring education as a site of domination, I look at how schools and teacher education programs can work to further oppress or marginalize minority groups. In particular, I examine current literature on how race and anti-racist education is included in B.Ed. programs and some of the challenges in implementing diversity training. Under theoretical lenses, I outline various ideologies and theories behind our current education system. I touch upon the following concepts under theory: hidden curriculum, Althusser's State Apparatus, Islamophobia and Black Feminism. The last sections focus on progressive and corrective ideas as represented by CRT and anti-racist education. The ideas brought forward by CRT and anti-racist education work to expose oppression and provide the tools to deconstruct racist events so that education can be a site of liberation.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology I used to complete my study. I also outline my participant selection method and how I approached my participants. I applied Critical Race Methodology (CRM) and qualitative research interviews, two methods that focus on marginalized voices. These methods advocate that interviews should be discussions between two subjects, rather than having the interviewer as the subject and

the interviewee as the object. Qualitative research interviews are sites of mutual knowledge building that can enrich understanding of Muslim experiences in education. In Chapter Three, I also review the processes I employed for transcription, coding and analysis. Finally, I discuss the credibility of the data by detailing how participants had the opportunity to review transcripts and provide feedback to ensure data correctly reflects the interviews.

In Chapter Four, I relate the interview data from my four participants. Once the interviews were transcribed, I had a wealth of data related to various themes. I had to sift through the data and select the excerpts directly related to teacher education. I also categorized the data in a logical manner. The three broad categories are racialized experiences prior to the B.Ed. program, experiences during the B.Ed. program, and experiences during the practicum components.

Chapter Five focuses on data analysis, discussions, and personal reflections about the inclusion of Muslims in the B.Ed. program. The results are discussed in relation to existing literature and studies about diversity in the field of education. Finally, I discuss the possible implications of this study for further research and practice in teacher education. Chapter Five is divided into three sections: discussion of results, implications for theory and practice, and implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this literature review is to situate the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates in Ontario based teacher education programs within the framework of Critical Race Feminism (CRF). Ontario is home to many diverse cultures and religions, including Islam. Ontario is one of the top destinations for Canadian immigrants; therefore, there is an increasing diversity of language, skin colour, culture and religion in Ontario schools (Ministry of Education, 2009). Around half of all immigrants coming into Canada from 2001-2006 chose Ontario as their home (Ministry of Education, 2009). In addition, by 2017, one fifth of Ontarians will be of non-traditional faiths such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism (Ministry of Education, 2009). The Ministry of Education (2009), having recognized the need for training teachers for diverse classrooms, set out mandates that ought to have been implemented by universities offering teacher education programs. Muslim teacher candidates were specifically selected as the focus of this research because Muslims are the subject of much discussion in Western media, and political and social circles since 9/11 (Akram & Johnson, 2002; Razack, 2008). Much of the discussion about Muslims is negative; therefore, teachers have to be sensitive to social issues concerning Muslim students. In addition, religion plays an important part of identity construction for many Muslims. Although attending secular schools, students from various faith groups are unable to/or are unwilling to leave this part of their identity at home (Subedi 2006). Again, it is essential for teachers to understand religious diversity in classrooms so they can accommodate the spiritual sense of self in their students (Subedi, 2006). Examining religious diversity in teacher education programs is

important to ensure future teachers are sensitive to students of various religions in their classrooms.

This literature review discusses how teacher education programs address religious diversity through the lens of CRF. This chapter will review the following four broad areas:

1. education as a site of domination (Ontario Teachers College, barriers to diversity, inclusive practices of diversity, and hidden curriculum),
2. theoretical lenses (curriculum and ideology, Critical Race Feminism),
3. Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Education in the pre-service program,
4. and education as a site of liberation.

Education as a Site of Domination

In the following section, I discuss the shortfalls in teacher education programs in addressing diversity and, specifically, religious diversity. First, I begin by examining the Ontario College of Teacher's (OCT) definitions and standards concerning diversity. As an accrediting institution of Ontario's B.Ed. programs, the ambiguity in how OCT approaches diversity can impact the inclusion of diversity in teacher education. Next, I discuss the literature that addresses both the deficiencies of the approaches to diversity in teacher education and the possible ways of amending these deficits. Overall, within the North American context, I have categorized the barriers to diversity in teacher education into four broad points: i) student resistance to course material related to diversity, ii) faculty resistance, iii) lack of student predisposition to diversity, iv) and the restricted length of the B.Ed. program. Research also points out various solutions to the aforementioned barriers. I have outlined four general suggestions as follows: i) self-

reflection and exploration of whiteness, ii) creating diverse cohorts, iii) disrupting the process of propagating harmful hegemonic beliefs at the faculty level, iv) and deconstructing the hidden curriculum of B.Ed. programs. The aforementioned barriers to diversity in teacher education are by no means a comprehensive list; rather, they are the general themes that were repeatedly noted in the research literature. Each category contains many specific examples of how discussion of diversity is constrained, which leads to the reinforcement of existing social hierarchies. I define these limitations as sites of domination of minority groups.

Ontario College of Teachers

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) accredits teacher education programs (B.Ed.) in Ontario. The OCT has a number of criteria for accreditation including that teacher education programs must promote the College's "Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession" (OCT, 2012). The standards are broken down into four areas, including respect. Respect is outlined as follows: "Intrinsic to the ethical standard of *Respect* are trust and fair-mindedness. Members honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model *respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice*, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment" (OCT, 2012) (added emphasis). This is the only standard from the Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice that approaches the issue of inclusivity and equitable treatment of minority students. Even then, the language used to define this ethical standard is quite vague and open to interpretation. Further reading on the OCT's website subsection on standards, reveals the absence of specific discourse about minority students. At best, examples of ethical conduct from the website include avoiding "biased

comments” (OCT, 2012). Again, the vagueness of the aforementioned definitions leaves the standards open to considerable interpretation and debate. The burgeoning diversity in Ontario cities means the types of spiritual and cultural values of students in Ontario classrooms can vary greatly from the traditional norm of values and culture that have been present in Canada. Diversity can mean many things; however, for this research, the discussion of diversity includes race, ethnicity, religion and culture, and the experiences amongst these diverse groups. During the B.Ed. program, teacher candidates need opportunities to explore and understand diversity, and learn how to respect norms different than their own. Through this exploration, the ethical standard of respect will be upheld by being an integral part of the program.

Barriers to Diversity in Teacher Education

The extent to and manner in which space for diversity is upheld in various B.Ed. programs varies according to different factors, such as experience of the professors who teach in B. Ed. programs, location of the university in a diverse or homogenous setting, institutional resources, and the make-up of the cohort (Barrett, Solomon, & Singer, 2009; Daniel, 2009). Current studies on teacher education programs show there is resistance on the part of B.Ed. instructors and the majority of white female teacher candidates to acknowledging racism and its forms of power and domination in society (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). Some instructors of B.Ed. programs limit the subject matter of cultural diversity to a single session; this makes it impossible to have in-depth or meaningful exploration of diversity in the classroom (Yan, Arthur, & Lund, 2009). This type of resistance to understanding the experiences of

minority groups in Canada means teacher education programs cannot move on to approaching diversity amongst students with respect and integrity.

There is existing literature on exploring whiteness in the teacher education program and having candidates interrogate their own beliefs so that they can open up to new understandings of diversity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Magnet, 2006; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Mitton-Kukner, Nelson, & Desrochers, 2010; Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell, 2005; Unruh & McCord, 2010). The aforementioned studies examine how white teacher candidates react to discussions about race or critical incidences involving race during class or school practicums. The research indicates that a teacher cannot practice antiracist education until s/he has developed personally to a level of open-mindedness. Pollock, Deckman, Mira and Shalaby (2010) examine reactions of teacher candidates to a race-based teacher education course. The cohort was made up of many people from various dispositions and experiences; thus, there was a divide within the group as to what the course should focus on. Many teachers who had never thought about “white” as a race felt that they had to first explore their inner beliefs and values before discussing what anti-racist classrooms look like. Some expressed they were unaware before the course of some of their harmful practices in the classroom or their negative views of people of other cultures. Other teachers, however, wanted only a list of concrete anti-racist practices they could take back to the classroom rather than philosophize about race, power and equity (Pollock, Deckman, Mira & Shalaby, 2010).

Creating a personal development course at a pre-service level to change attitudes towards diversity will be a difficult task. This is especially so when considering that most candidates are from middle class Anglo-backgrounds with little exposure to anti-racist thought, and that many teacher education programs are only a yearlong (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010). Courses that do not focus on race issues in-depth, however, have minimal or superficial results for teachers. In fact, a superficial approach may leave teachers to use information to reinforce pre-existing ideas (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010). There have been a number of studies that examine a teacher's predisposition to diversity or experiences with diversity that will affect their openness to antiracist training (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Unruh & McCord, 2010). Mills and Ballantyne outlined three important dispositions a pre-service teacher must have to find diversity training fruitful. The traits are: self-awareness of one's beliefs and practices, openness to diversity issues, and commitment to social justice. Their study found that 75% of the pre-service teachers showed self-awareness, 40% showed openness in addition to self-awareness, and only 6% showed commitment to social justice. In addition, 25% of students did not show any of the above traits. If pre-service diversity training is to have any impact on education practices, then in light of the above information, courses have to focus on personal development and interrogation of present social hierarchies before examining anti-racist practice in the classroom.

Inclusive Practices of Diversity in Teacher Education

At the administrative level, changes have to be made to disrupt current practices that may be harmful to the inclusion of diversity. Daniel (2009) identifies the importance of having an instructor who is willing, knowledgeable, and sensitive to discussions of

race and other forms of oppression. The instructor must be able to engage the teacher candidates in experiential learning in which candidates explore their prior assumptions about race and racism. The instructor must also move away from celebratory multiculturalism where participants celebrate various cultures and races without actually interrogating the relationships of power and oppression between the dominant and minority people (Solomon, 1996). Both Daniel (2009) and Razack (1998) discuss the issue of multiculturalism, democracy, and equal rights as covert forms of resistance to change and resistance to the examination and ultimate dismantling of existing hierarchies in society. As long as instructors and institutions superficially celebrate multiculturalism, democracy, and equal rights; then they are safe from criticism of being exclusive to minority groups (Daniel 2009; Razack 1998).

On the part of the candidates, they must be able to open up to discussions of oppression and deal maturely with feelings of discomfort that may arise from such discussions. Mitton-Kukner, Nelson, and Desrochers (2010) outline how narrative inquiry can help teacher candidates develop their personal anti-racist beliefs. Three teacher candidates engaged in training within cultures foreign to their own, thereby creating the setting for the candidates to explore cultural diversity. The candidates then narrated the experience within a framework of self-reflection. The study followed their personal development in the area of diversity, and mapped their progress from becoming self-aware to becoming willing to learn equitable classroom practices.

Daniel (2009) and Escayg (2010) both suggest that dialogue about race, diversity, and social justice would be more approachable and in-depth if the make-up of teacher education cohorts purposely included candidates of diverse backgrounds. Having diverse

cohorts helps dialogue and understanding from all sides as the situation provides the context for racially based critical incidences that can help candidates become more aware of race-related power struggles. Daniel (2009) examined cohorts made up of diverse candidates and found that discussions of racial diversity were more easily approached while candidates tried to relate through their own experiences with difference. Teacher candidates who had prior experiences with difference, or had experiences with social justice issues, tended to have a more developed notion of equity and justice that they could transfer and develop when discussing issues of race. Although it is important to avoid making any single experience or exposure to diversity the same as other types of differences; any prior experience can be a starting point for further dialogue that will open doors to further understanding of diversity within the context of social hierarchies of power (Daniel, 2009; James, 2000).

Hidden Curriculum

Teacher education programs also require critical examination for elements of a hidden curriculum working to reinforce existing power structures in society. Specifically, ideas of cultural deficit can be propagated through a hidden curriculum of textbooks, expectations, and forms of instruction. The hidden curriculum, a term Jackson (1968) developed, refers to the “implicit messages to convey ‘appropriate’ values, beliefs, and behaviours to children” (de Marrais and LeCompte, 1998, p. 13). According to Barrett, Solomon and Singer (2009), the hidden curriculum can include “the cultural, political and institutional forces that underpin the seemingly natural or common-sense methods, pedagogical choices, and responses of teachers in their classrooms” (p. 681). Teachers and instructors can implicitly reinforce ideas of cultural superiority and cultural deficit

through their practices and responses to students. Daniel (2009) outlines in her research that “teacher candidates respond to issues of race and racism in ways that are at times unconscious, but also strongly influenced by the negative racial ideation that is present in the media and society at large” (p. 179). During the completion of B.Ed. programs, teacher candidates should actively participate in exploring personal and social biases and prejudices. There has to be an active and purposeful disruption of knowledge that supports oppressive systems. Graduating without completing such exercises is problematic for future teachers and diverse students. Looking specifically at the perceptions people hold of Muslims and the negativity propagated by the media (Mogadime, Smith, & Scott, 2011), we can see how teacher candidates could hold unfavourable views of Muslims students and teach to perpetuate racism in the classroom.

Another aspect to the hidden curriculum is the uncritical examination of current beliefs about the inclusivity of the education system (Knight 2002; Daniel 2009; Razack 1998). There is a mistaken belief that schools are welcoming all students via multicultural celebrations and costume parties, while failing to recognize that these celebrations actually do nothing in the transfer of power from the dominant to the oppressed groups (Dei & Calliste, 2000). There is a mistaken belief that academic institutions allow each student the opportunity to succeed by superficially upholding democratic values of equality and freedom without understanding that students start from different points in the social hierarchy, so there is no level field of opportunity and freedom (Razack 1998). The failure of any student is then taken to be a form of “student deficit” as the school system has afforded students all they can in terms of respect, tolerance, and equal opportunity (Daniel, 2009).

The aforementioned studies are important for understanding how to break down barriers to discussing race in the teacher candidate program. These studies also highlight how teacher education programs cater mainly to white middle class teacher candidates because they form the majority of many of the education cohorts; however, this focus may be at the expense of hearing from minority teacher candidates (Knight, 2002).

Exploring the voices and experiences of minority teacher candidates is important because research indicates how their experiences and knowledge can enrich the teacher education program (Daniel, 2009). The study of minority teacher candidates is a growing and rich field of research in which scholars have contributed important ideas and evidence about race and education. Solomon (1997) brought forward studies in the Canadian context in which the minority teacher candidate's voice is brought to the centre of the study.

Razack, S., Smith, M., & Thobani, S. (2010); Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2001) and Collins (2000) have all explored race and education from a CRT perspective in which they explain the importance of interlocking sites of oppression and their cumulative effects on people. Their work is important because they place race into a framework of interlocking sites of oppression that can be found within the education system.

In summary, although the Ontario College of Teachers works to accredit teacher education programs that support the ethics of respect for spiritual and cultural values, there are still active systems of oppression in the teaching and the curriculum of teacher education programs. The educational site is also a site of domination where future teachers are prepared to carry on the current relationships of power and domination in society (Daniel, 2009).

Theoretical Lenses

The various systems of power in the education system can be analysed through various theoretical lenses. The following section focuses on the ideological nature of teacher education while using CRF to place race and gender in the centre of research.

Curriculum and Ideology

In touching upon the issues of curriculum and the hidden curriculum, it is essential to first examine the ideological nature of teacher education curriculum so that the operation of implicit and explicit curriculum is better understood. The structure of the education system can be explained as entrenched in a political framework of power and marginalization. To truly understand this dichotomy, we have to look at Althusser's (1970) ideological state apparatus. For Althusser, ideology is "a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1970, p. 23). In other words, Althusser describes ideology as an interpretation of reality which is then propagated through various "apparatuses". These various apparatuses work to materialize the ideology of a group. These apparatuses consist of institutional structures, such as schools, where people are educated en masse to believe the dominant ideology (Althusser, 1970). The dominant group of people who possess the dominant ideology can be a social class, racial group, or combination. In the case of the West (Canada, U.S. and the U.K.) the dominant group is comprised of the white middle-upper class (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998).

Apple (1978) has completed more detailed work on schools' function as the ideological state apparatus through which the dominant ideology is spread among students so that they are prepared for certain social roles that perpetuate pre-existing

power structures in society. This idea is echoed in the Reproduction Theory where schools are seen as the apparatus to keep the status quo of social and economic power with the dominant class (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998). Apple (1970) also states that “the language of learning tends to be apolitical and ahistorical; thus, hiding the complex nexus of political and economic power and resources that lies behind a considerable amount of curriculum organization and selection” (p. 372). While asserting the political and economic ties to schooling, Apple also touches on the implicit nature of the political forces behind school curriculum.

Similarly, Eisner (2002) looks at the implicit aspect of the curriculum in his work. He contends that not only are school and curriculum based on dominant political and economic ideology, but that this ideology is hidden behind the more explicit or overt curriculum expectations. Eisner examines the explicit curriculum in the form of stated objectives, implicit curriculum is what is learned from the structure of the school and education, and the null curriculum is what students learn from the absence of certain topics in the curriculum. As Eisner breaks down the implicit messages from the sterile structure of schools, he concludes that “schools are educational churches, and our gods, judging from the altars we build, are economy and efficiency. Hardly a nod is given to the spirit” (p. 97). Again, as with Apple, Eisner (2002) points out that the ideological basis of education represent the politics and economics of the dominant group hidden behind the more obviously stated objectives of schooling. This hidden curriculum is just as readily learned by students as is the explicit and null curriculum. In the case of teacher education programs, their curriculum is based on the ideological beliefs of the dominant group in North America.

Expectations of behaviour, language, and cultural values in teacher education programs all come from the white, upper-middle class (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998; Knight, 2002). In addition to these implicit expectations, teacher education programs focus mostly on white, female, middle class students; thus, silencing the voices of minority candidates (Berry, 2009; Knight, 2002). Voices from candidates of colour are effectively ignored so that they are not given any power within the program. As long as the white teacher candidates and white professors continue to be the main subjects who are doing all the theorizing and analysing of the minority experience, then they can satisfy their sense of being open minded and fair without actually having to give up any of their power or allowing the candidates of colour to become subjects as opposed to objects (Berry, 2009; Knight, 2002; Kohli, 2009).

The teaching and acceptance of beliefs in superiority of the dominant group and the inferiority of the minority group can be explained by hegemony, a concept coined by Gramsci, which is the “permeation *throughout* society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations” (Burke, 2005). The hegemonic process is a subtle process in which people convert to and support the ideologies being propagated. In fact, Gramsci wrote about the Christian world and the Muslim world or the Orient as “rival hegemonies” (Boothman, 2012, p. 139). Orientalism was born out of this rivalry for the purposes of using various tropes to disseminate the belief of Western superiority over the Orient (Amin-Khan, 2012). Amin-Khan (2012) goes further to describe today’s New Orientalism as now focused on political and military attacks on the Orient while promoting Islamophobic sentiment in the Occident. With a reference to the Canadian Muslim community, there is

a defined Islamophobic ideology being propagated by the media and some politicians. The negativity in which some media outlets, politicians, and some within society discuss Muslims can be defined under the term Islamophobia. Oxford dictionaries define Islamophobia as “a hatred or fear of Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force” (Islamophobia, 2012). Political force here denotes power, so there is a heightened fear of Muslims attaining some sort of power as a collective. In addition, I would like to add here that it is an *irrational* hatred or fear of Muslims as a collective group. Islamophobia is not just an attitude; it has also translated into decisive action against Muslims such as: imprisoning Muslim men without trial or access to charges/evidence, racial profiling during security checks at borders and airports, physical or verbal assaults in public places, and vandalism of Mosques (Razack, 2008). This is by no means an exhaustive list as Islamophobia continues to grow as an institutionalized force.

The implications of Islamophobia for the field of education are considerable. Teacher education programs have to provide a space for candidates to critically explore their understanding of Muslim students and how power relations of domination and oppression work in the classroom against their Muslim students. Teacher candidates also have to explore their own beliefs in regards to Islamophobia before they can effectively teach Muslim students (Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003). Following Muslim teacher candidates through their B.Ed. programs will provide some insight into how teacher education programs create space for discussion of religious diversity and Islamophobia in our current context. Examining the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates may provide ways to deconstruct the prevailing ideology in current teacher education programs and then look for ways to reconstruct new ones within a framework of social

justice or anti-racist education. One way to analyse the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates in a teacher education program would be to critique their experiences through the theoretical lenses of CRF. CRF allows the study of the racialized Muslim experience in the teacher education program in relation to additional interlocking sites of oppression such as gender, religion and culture.

Critical Race Feminism: A Way of Viewing Dynamics in the Classroom

Critical Race Feminism has its roots in Critical Race Theory; however CRF brings gender with race to the centre of the theoretical framework to examine experiences of women of colour (Berry, 2009). CRF shares five central tenets of CRT:

1. racism is an ordinary and day to day part of American society,
2. the concept of race is a social construct rather than scientific,
3. “voice of colour thesis” in which storytelling can be used as a methodology,
4. uses a multidisciplinary approach, and critical race praxis (Berry, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

In addition to these fundamentals, CRF also borrows concepts of interlocking sites of oppression from Black Feminist Theory.

Black Feminism arose from the need to examine multiple forces of oppression rather than examining forces in isolation such as gender *or* race. Black Feminism lends itself well to the study of Muslim teacher candidates as their experiences include race, gender, religion, language, as well as other forces (Collins, 2000). Black Feminism has included Black, South Asian and other women of colour who have come together to examine marginalization and femininity, as well as colour and race (Zine, 2004). The idea of multiple sites of oppression intersecting or interlocking has been given

considerable attention in various literatures (Razack, 1998). Examining multiple interlocking sites of oppression is important as individuals are made up of multiple identities that are “sites of shifting power relations that inform, constrain, and determine the human experience and condition” (Dei & Calliste, 2000, p. 31).

Much of the literature on CRT, Black Feminism and intersectionalities does not discuss religion in detail as a site of oppression or domination. There is, however, a growing body of research that discusses the racialization of Muslims and their religious identity (Lopez, 2011). For the purposes of this study, I read the literature available and found it readily applicable to CRF. Discussion of religion in feminism within the Western secular context can vary greatly. Zine (2004), in her study of “faith centered space” within anti-racist feminism, identifies various positions feminists have taken regarding religion. One extreme position is that religion is seen as a tool of oppression against women, and, thus, religion is incompatible with feminism. Zine (2004, 2006), however, asserts in various works that Muslim feminism can exist without contradicting Islam or women’s rights. There are still Muslim and non-Muslim women who believe that Islam is inherently oppressive for women and that god is patriarchal (Barlas, 2002). Barlas, an Islamic feminist, asserts that Islam is not inherently oppressive and that it can be read from a feminist point of view without contradicting any part of the religion. She also approaches religion as not strictly patriarchal, rather the historical readings by men are what work to oppress Muslim women (Barlas, 2002). The work of Muslim women in feminist theory is important because through this medium Muslim women can speak as subjects rather than being spoken about.

Sensoy (2007), another Western-based Muslim professor, explores “gendered Orientalism” in the teacher education program where Muslim women are still seen as backwards and oppressed women. In discussing the Orientalist narratives about Muslim women, Sensoy (2007) asserts that “such narratives continue to shape Muslim women’s lives and the manner in which our bodies are read within, and by, the West today” (p. 362). Examples of gendered Orientalist readings of Muslim women can be found in common literature in public schools and teacher education, such as *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), *Three Cups of Tea* (Mortenson & Relin, 2006), *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (Nafisi, 2004); all of which exemplify the oppression of Muslim women and their need for saving by the powerful West (Sensoy & Marshall, 2010). Confronting and critiquing such views of Muslim women is important within CRF so that Muslim women can have a legitimate voice in teacher education programs. Gendered Orientalism discusses Muslim women without actually allowing them their own voices to identify themselves or thoughts (Sensoy, 2007).

Interestingly, the extremists from Islam also take away the right of women to voice their experiences and thoughts as does gendered Orientalism (Zine, 2006). The extremist view reads religious texts literally and does not give room for questions or differing interpretations than the literal. No reading, however, is neutral, rather, the dominant literal reading is entrenched in patriarchal thought, which has taken on the value of being the norm or neutral (Zine, 2006). This struggle between the extremist and the Orientalist becomes more extreme on either side as they try to prove the rightness of their views. The more fundamental interpretations of religion become more rigid, and it is usually women who bear the brunt of this as men try to show their religious strength by

creating restrictions for women (Ramadan, 2001). For example, politically enforced covering of faces and eyes, disallowing women to drive or work illustrate the aforementioned phenomenon. On the other extreme, we can look to countries like France and the province of Quebec where governments are trying to ban face veils under the guise of liberating oppressed Muslim woman. Banning public services to women who cover their faces is not very different from the banning of public services to women *without* the face veil under Taliban rule. When instructors of teacher education programs broach the subject of equity and Muslim school girls, they must be wary of falling into the Orientalist way of understanding Muslim girls and women as it would work to further oppress them, rather than providing ways to understand and bridge cultural gaps.

Black feminism and Muslim feminism are labels and categories that are necessary parts of any study; however, using the terms should not be taken to assign monolithic value to all Black women or Muslims. Socially created labels cannot always neatly contain identities. There is an intracategorical complexity that is difficult to label (Razack, 1998). For example, within the population of those who identify as Muslim, there are diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups who are further divided into sects. Each variation creates a new experience for people who will in turn read their history, religion, and place in society differently (Bhabha, 1996). Ultimately however, people have to live with the experiences of these socially created labels, therefore, examining the interlocking sites of domination will help define and deconstruct various power structures (Razack, 1998).

Collins (2000), a Black Feminist, explains the matrix of domination in which oppression and resistance can take place on different levels. There is oppression and sites

of resistance on personal, social and institutional levels (Collins, 2000). For the purposes of my intended research, all of these levels are connected and while exploring experiences at one level, other levels are also included in the complexity. I hope to use this study to locate how self-identifying Muslim teacher candidates negotiate various levels and sites of domination during their experiences with the B.Ed. program.

Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Education in the Pre-service Program

When it comes to teacher education, there have been a number of studies on exploring whiteness as a colour of privilege. On one hand, studies focus largely on this concept because education in North America is dominated by white, middle class females (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998). Researchers have explored ways of preparing this type of teacher for increasingly diverse classrooms. These studies include training to change personal racist or potentially harmful beliefs, professional anti-racist training, and having teachers recognize their places of privilege (Mills & Ballantyne, 2009; Mitton-Kukner, Nelson, & Desrochers, 2010; Pollock, Deckman, Mira & Shalaby, 2010; Solomon, 1996, 1997, 2005). On the other hand, there is the need for additional voices to be heard from minority teacher candidates in pre-service programs. In particular, gaining insight to the experiences of racialized Muslims will help us further understand how anti-racist teaching can apply in this area.

In the case of Muslims, experiences vary according to ethnicity and visibility of faith (Shah & Shaikh, 2010). Teachers or teacher candidates of Muslim faith perceive various barriers to their careers. In particular, there is a fear to associate themselves with the Muslim community or Mosques, lest others see them as terrorists (Shah & Shaikh, 2010). This fear can be understood considering “attacks” from popular media on Muslim

communities. In a study on Muslim youth and media discourse, researchers found nine prominent themes about Muslims in media. Of those nine themes, five included the word terrorism, while six of them identify Muslims as some sort of threat to the Western way of life (Mogadime, Smith, & Scott, 2011). Given the social and media reaction to Muslims as a whole, it is understandable that Muslims feel uncomfortable about their perceived identities and sense of power or value in society. Identity, how we see ourselves, as well as how others see us, is an essential part of our existence (Calhoun, 1994). When others see personal characteristics as negative, then the person has to either change that aspect or resist the negative labels or assumptions. It would be unfair to ask Muslims (or any faith group) to give up their faith or try to become invisible by blending in to avoid the label of terrorist. They cannot simply stop being, looking, or acting like a Muslim for the sake of blending in and avoiding discrimination.

According to Collins (2000), sites of resistance to oppression can be individual, social, and institutional. Resisting the negativity associated with Islam and Muslim identity can take place at all three levels. Identity and identity construction is complex and evolves over time; thus, it is essential to bring to the surface the multiple interlocking sites of oppression to understand stereotypes associated with the Muslim identity. Unfortunately, many times people will only see one facet of ones' identity. Abdurraqib (2009) points out in her narrative that she is always recognized as a black person and her identity as a woman and a Muslim are "eclipsed" by her blackness. Razack (1998) also points out that many times in courts, oppression is recognized in a singular manner, and the multiple sites of oppression experienced by the marginalized are ignored. For example, sexual harassment of a woman of colour will be seen either as a sexist or racial

encounter but not both together, thus missing the complexity of such an encounter (Razack, 1998). On the other hand, research has been done and continues in the field of education of minority experience within CRF, as well as in CRT, which allow the uncovering of multiple complexities of their experiences.

There is some literature available on the experiences of pre-service teachers of colour in the B.Ed. programs, as well as experiences of teachers of colour in school settings. From this literature, I have found the following six general themes that define the minority experience.

One theme that surfaced from current literature on minority teacher candidates is that candidates of colour are able to offer a unique perspective to anti-racist pedagogy, which should be discussed in the pre-service program. Many minority candidates narrated experiences with some sort of racism in their personal lives (Solomon, 1997). Candidates of colour may be more able to empathize with students considered “different”. Candidates of colour may also be able to pick out racist or prejudiced incidents in curriculum materials and in the classroom because of their experiential sensitivity to such scenarios (Kohli, 2009). The experiences and knowledge these candidates can bring into the program can work to make everyone more aware of anti-racist issues that may not have been discussed otherwise.

Another theme is that candidates of colour can feel silenced in the pre-service program because their views, experiences and insights may not be heard in the pre-service program. The idea of neutrality or professionalism ignores the important perspective a candidate of colour can offer. In the efforts to achieve equity, instructors often attempt colour blindness so that difficult topics are not discussed, and thereby

ignore the voices of difference and experience. Sometimes common stereotypes are further propagated through ignorance, which works to further silence the marginalized (Berry, 2009).

The third re-occurring theme in the literature was that many candidates of colour were made to feel that their position in schools or the teacher education program stemmed from tokenism. This created two problems: just having a person of colour in the room was enough to call the program or school multicultural, while ignoring the deeper discussions of anti-racist education. Secondly, some teachers were subject to racial microaggressions from other professionals through ignorant comments about their presence because of hiring policies, rather than abilities (Berry, 2009; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000).

Fourthly, in much of the literature, there is an absence of religion or various factors of identity when exploring race or colour. Skin colour is an important site to explore because it is visible; however, focus is taken away from other visible facets of identity that provoke oppression, such as gender or visibility of faith (Abdurraqib, 2009). Religion is a major part of identity and just like race or ethnicity, it cannot be ignored; religion needs to be discussed in the pre-service program. I found throughout the literature that the focus on oppressive factors included colour and gender even though participants' faiths may also have varied. Although, it is difficult to explore all aspects of various sites of oppression in a single study, it is important to note the multiple sites as they all interlock and support each other to oppress or empower a person (Razack, 2008). There is an absence of discussion of religion within the anti-racist framework that needs to be addressed in the face of Islamophobia (Subedi, 2006).

Another re-occurring theme is that candidates of colour feel “forced” into the role of speaking for the general population of students of colour (Solomon, 1997). Candidates felt they had to be the mouthpiece for their entire community. Their experiences and opinions were taken to represent their community, without question. This heavy responsibility left many candidates feeling uncomfortable as the diversity within their own communities was not recognized (Solomon, 1997). Abdurraqib (2009) also addresses this issue in her work in which she identifies the problem of “authority of experience” that minority groups are given. A term coined by Fuss, it points to the ignorant assumption on part of the dominant group that the experience of the minority does not have to be questioned or examined and one person’s experience is ultimately an essentialist truth about the experiences of the whole minority. This idea is further complicated by the fact that what the person in a marginal position shares with the dominant group, and what the dominant group hears can be two different things. The dominant group will hear and accept stories that confirm their beliefs about marginal groups (Razack, 1998). Marginalized people also react in different ways when speaking for themselves or for their groups. They may change their stories to reflect what the dominant group wants to hear so as not to create a disturbance in their setting (Razack, 1998). On the other hand, however, some candidates felt comfortable being the point of contact for anti-racist discussion. Some enjoyed the attention and responsibility from the students and teachers during their practicums for multicultural events and anti-racist discussions (Solomon, 1997).

Finally, the sixth theme present in the literature is that the practicum experiences of candidates of colour fell into two categories: some experienced racism from the

associate teacher; some had more personable experiences with students and parents of colour. The two extremes were discussed in the literature with some describing upsetting and outright racist situations. Some candidates of colour who had their practicum in diverse schools reported pleasant experiences with the students and the parents. One expressed joy at being invited for dinner at a students' home as the parents were happy to see someone from a similar ethnic background (Solomon, 1997).

These six themes show the depth of complexity in experiences that can be discussed and analysed to further enhance future diversity training in the B.Ed. program.

Education as a Site of Liberation and Present Study

My intended research is based on Freirean thought about teaching as political and social. Teachers are social agents of change, rather than bankers who merely deposit knowledge into the empty minds of their students (Freire, 1998). Teachers are critical workers who question the unquestioned, prompt the students to think, and facilitate exploration and finding of knowledge. I once heard a principal say that teachers are to be neutral and they must leave their personal thoughts/feelings at the door. This sterile approach to teacher education ignores the fact that as soon as a teacher enters the classroom, s/he brings with her characteristics, perceived or real, to be interrogated by the students. For example, as soon as a well-dressed white teacher enters the room, there are instant assumptions made about that person and their position in society. There is no such thing as a neutral teacher. Teachers can and do act out their beliefs un/consciously for the students to observe and understand (Dei, 1997). Understanding these dynamics and uncovering them in the B.Ed. program will help to dismantle the negative power relations in our schools. Undertaking such studies will hopefully make all participants in

the B.Ed. program more aware of how they can move forward in creating equitable classrooms. Equity and justice in schools is not a simple matter, as illustrated by the aforementioned review, oppression and marginalization are deeply entrenched systems in our world. Razack (1998) points out in her work that education based on social justice is not about presenting new material, but instead it is about disrupting the knowledge that we hold presently. Important steps must be taken to disrupt the damage caused from the dissemination of hegemonic views that teachers learn and carry forward in their classroom overtly and covertly. Anti-racist education has to begin with the administrators of the B.Ed. program being aware of potential voids in their programs so that they are truly upholding the values and ethics of treating every child with dignity. In particular, the harmful stereotypes of Muslims have to be interrogated and deconstructed in teacher education programs so that future teachers have greater insight of Muslim student populations. I hope my research adds to the body of work on creating safe spaces in the B.Ed. program where oppressive knowledge can be disrupted and dismantled to make room for a more equitable understanding of diversity.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Schools and education have a major role in shaping society. Schools can work to either reaffirm existing social hierarchies; or dismantle oppressive systems. My research examines the unique experiences of Muslim teacher candidates so that race based hierarchies can be exposed and disrupted. Nelson Mandela said, “Education, if formulated and implemented with the practices of justice and equity, is the great engine of social development” (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 13). My research examines how teacher education programs can prepare teachers to become socio-cultural agents of justice and equity (Freire, 1998). Specifically, I examine the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates within a framework of Critical Race Methodology (CRM) to expose the need for a heightened call for justice and equity, as well as provide a nuanced critique of the inequity and oppression particular to these experiences.

Methodology & Research Design

Understanding the experiences of the marginalized minority from their voices is an essential goal of this research. CRM addresses the various dynamics of this research project. CRM recognizes the complexity of intersectionality in racialized experiences. In addition, CRM pushes for a dialogue with the marginalized so their experiences can be understood from their perspective.

Critical Race Theory: Methodology

To advance my work of critical inquiry, I used CRM, an idea advanced by Solorzano and Yosso (2002). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) discuss the need to build upon Critical Race Theory (CRT) to further research and theory about race and racism (p. 23). CRM is a theoretical approach to examining race and racism. Solorzano and Yosso

(2002) outline five traits that CRM encompasses that make it a working methodology (p. 24). Firstly, CRM ensures that race and racism is at the centre of research material, rather than at the periphery. Secondly, CRM proposes to offer new material in analysing the experiences of people of colour that traditional research may have missed or ignored. Thirdly, CRM develops and forges solutions to the oppressions that people of colour experience. Fourthly, CRM stresses intersecting dynamics that affect people of colour. In addition, these intersecting experiences are viewed as “sources of strength” for people of colour (p. 24). In other words, people of colour can find ways of empowering themselves through reflecting on these experiences. These sites of oppression can become sites of contestation and liberation. Finally, CRM uses research focused on people of colour from a number of disciplines such as women’s studies, history, humanity, and law.

CRM/CRT and Religion

CRT in education is a way of identifying and confronting “subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language and national origin” in the classroom (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). I also want to include religion as an additional basis for marginalization. In the North American context, there is a growing need for more research on how religious identity impacts the classroom and how teachers approach religious diversity (Subedi, 2006). Since 9/11 there has been an increase in the discussion of religion and religious identity in the social sphere. Various reactionary attacks after 9/11 which targeted mosques, as well as Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh temples, show the general social ignorance about the differences between these religions (Khalema & Jones, 2003). In 2011, NBC reported two cases in which Sikh men were

attacked after being mistaken for Muslim men (Huang, 2011). North American culture and the education system are based on the European roots of Christianity and, within this system, different religions are all considered as “the other”, or strange and exotic (Subedi, 2006). According to Mogadime, Ramrattan Smith and Scott (2011), print media have played a role in influencing North American readerships into putting these religions with their adherents and places of worship into one category as they all seem like “the other”, “strange”, or possible “breeding grounds” for terrorists. There is a need for further studies on the religious identities of students, as well as discussions about religious diversity in the classroom from a culturally inclusive perspective (Sensoy, 2007; Subedi, 2006). Placing religion within the context of CRM and examining the Muslim experience in the sphere of education can work in part to fulfill some of this need, as well as work more purposefully towards ensuring equitable practises are promoted in teacher education programs.

CRM and CRT in Education

CRM and CRT have developed from the legal studies; however, the ideas and methodology are also highly relevant to education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) further outline five main components of CRM in the context of education (pp. 25-26):

1. The first component is examining “*intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination*” in the classroom. For this study, I look at the intersections of race with religion, gender, and ethnicity. Islamophobia is complex in that the type of oppression faced by Muslims varies according to

colour of skin, visibility of religion (hijab, dress), gender, and ethnicity (Shah & Shaikh, 2010).

2. Another component of this methodology is “*the challenge to dominant ideology*”. Dominant ideologies are considered neutral or normal but in reality, they are part of the social hierarchical structure. In schools or education, the middle class White culture is considered neutral or as the normal standard by which other cultures are measured for differences. de Marrais & LeCompte (1998) draw on various theories and experiences to illustrate how the norm in North American schools is actually the culture of the dominant White middle-class rather than a culturally neutral standard (p. 12, 207).
3. The third component to CRM is “*the commitment to social justice*.” Social justice is a major component of this study. The importance of this study stems from exploring how daily interactions in the education field have the potential to either reinforce or breakdown Islamophobia. These polarities have to be considered given the rise in Islamophobia that has even taken on violent forms (Akram & Johnson, 2002). Schools reflect the social climate and it is important for teachers to be aware of the social climate and how their actions work to oppress or empower their students.
4. The fourth element of CRM is asserting “*the centrality of experiential knowledge*.” In this study, teachers of a Muslim background who have been and are living through prevalent forms of Islamophobia are given the dominant voice. This is a way of giving value to the experiences of marginalized people and using their experiences as important knowledge to further ways of understanding and

learning. Listening to Muslim voices in teacher education programs can provide relevant information for creating deeper understanding of equitable approaches to religious diversity within these educational learning contexts.

5. “*Transdisciplinary perspective*”, the fifth element, is an important perspective perhaps most articulately explained by Edward Said’s Orientalism. This perspective challenges the supposed cultural neutrality of studies that form accepted norms by examining the temporal and social context of the studies (Said, 1978). My research uncovers some of the accepted norms of the teacher education program when it comes to religious diversity and Islam; norms that are embedded in the practices of teacher education programs (Daniel, 2009).

Dialoguing with Muslim candidates reveals some of the impact these norms have on the function of teacher education in the area of religious diversity.

Qualitative Research Interview

Keeping CRM in mind, I conducted qualitative research interviews to understand the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates in their pre-service programs. I have taken the term and explanation of qualitative research interviews from Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) work on interviews and research methodology. Similar research methodology has been cited by critical race and anti-racist workers for whom interviewing is a key component to bringing the voices and experiences of the marginalized minority to the forefront (Chapman, 2005; Okolie, 2005). Interviews must be a form of dialogue in which both the interviewer and interviewee are active subjects (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview is a site of mutual knowledge construction between *both* the interviewer and interviewee where the interviewee is given the opportunity to be heard in

his/her own words. Qualitative research interviews centre on the CRT tenet of experiential knowledge. Understanding reality from the perspective of various actors adds to our knowledge base.

This type of dialogue also highlights the flaw in claiming that the interviewer can be neutral. Both the interviewer and interviewee bring their prior understanding and knowledge to the discussion as they actively build a new understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2005). Similarly, critical race literature also points out that no social research is truly objective and neutral (Chapman, 2005). Both Kvale (2009) and Okolie (2005) explain that the notions of objectivity in social research are derived from positivism. Positivism is the application of methodologies from natural sciences to social sciences for the purposes of finding universal laws or principles (Okolie, 2005). Historical-sociological methodologies stemming from Marxist literature, including CRT and anti-racist literature, reject the false notion of objectivity and neutrality in social studies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Okolie, 2005). In fact, by acknowledging the location of the interviewer, the research becomes more transparent and has a higher degree of credibility (Okolie, 2005).

Qualitative research interviews also fit into CRM because they promote the principles of social justice. Interview questions, if crafted appropriately, can work to not only elicit responses, but to inform the subjects or conscientize the subjects (Okolie, 2005). In the process of the interview dialogue, the interviewee can become aware of new information and also learn to put their experiences into a theoretical framework (Chapman, 2005; Okolie, 2005).

For the purposes of this research, I used semi-structured interviews where I guided the conversation along predetermined questions as the interviewer. At the same time, however, a semi-structured interview does not impose rigidity or limit the responses of the interviewee to predetermined selections as a questionnaire for example (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is important to allow the interviewee to express him/herself as the philosophical point of this type of research is to understand the world from the subject's point of view. This type of research is part of a phenomenological approach in which I explore the reality of a particular subject (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The specific group that I interviewed were female Muslim teacher candidates in Ontario whose interview data were then examined from the theoretical lens of CRT that integrates feminism.

CRF, a term from Delgado's work, is a field of study developed from CRT (Wing, 1997). CRF examines the "gendered racial" experiences of women of colour that have been influenced by their race and gender (Essed, 2001; Wing, 1997). Genderism and racism are two different types of oppression that can also intersect. Essed (2001) labeled this intersection as "gendered racism". Gendered racism is a specific type of racism towards women of colour. Naming the specific type of racism women face is important for further research in an area that has been largely unexplored (Daniel, 2005). The negative tropes of women of colour permeate various socio-political spheres and work to hinder the social mobility of those affected (Essed, 2001). Further, these tropes affect the self-perception and self-esteem of women of colour (Essed, 2001). Gendered racism varies with different ethnic groups. For Muslim women, racist stereotypes include depicting Muslim women as voiceless, submissive to men, powerless and burka-clad.

Zine (2006) specifically refers to this phenomenon as “gendered Islamophobia”, an “ethno-religious” form of racism (p. 240).

Essed (2001) further stresses the importance of exploring “everyday racisms” (para.1). She also points out that “everyday racisms” do not indicate small or trivial events, but indicate situations of oppressions faced on a day to day basis that accumulate to have devastating effects on women of colour. Wing (1997) calls these accumulating negative effects “spirit injury” (p. 952). Spirit injury includes the psychological, spiritual and cultural effects of various types of assaults that women may face (p. 952). Essed (2001) also illustrates how sometimes women of colour silently bear the burden of these assaults because they cannot name the racism. They are unable to name racism behind the situation because it may happen so regularly, happen covertly, or the victim may be ignorant of the larger systems of oppression at work in her daily life. Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso (2000) describe covert, racist, and everyday incidences as racial microaggressions from the dominant group towards the marginalized group. Racial microaggressions are conscious or unconscious acts, statements or behaviours towards people of colour that are racist. For example, in the educational context it may be the low expectations a teacher has of his/her students of colour. The consequences of low expectations include teachers not helping the particular students as much in class or not encouraging them in enrichment or extra-curricular activities (Solorzano et al., 2000). These everyday racial microaggressions accumulate and result in real damage such as increased drop-out rates from school among Black students (Dei, 1997).

Another important aspect of CRF is listening to women’s experiences within their own contexts without comparing them to an essentialist standard of womanhood (Wing,

1997, p. 948). Wing identifies the essentialist standard as the white middle class woman against which experiences of women of colour are measured and assessed. Examining women of colour in such a way would not do them any justice. Using such a measuring stick would mute their voices by superimposing essential values and standards over their experiences.

Examining the experiences of female Muslim teacher candidates in their education programs provides insights to the specific types of “everyday racisms” and racial microaggressions that Muslim women may face in an educational institution. This research also deconstructs some of the existing tropes about Muslim women being voiceless and powerless. By conducting interviews in which Muslim women are active subjects, this research brings their voices and thoughts to the forefront and, thus, creates a space in which Muslim women can explore their experiences within their unique context.

Site and Participant Selection

The study involved four participants who identify themselves as Muslim. All four women wear hijab (hair covering), with one wearing additional niqab (face veil) and abaya (black cloak). All four women completed their B.Ed. within the last three years at a university in Ontario. I was fortunate enough to find participants who all attended different universities, which allowed for broader descriptions of teacher education experiences. I selected participants through a snowballing process in which I initially emailed research invitations to Muslim women I knew in the education field. I asked them to forward the invitation to any other Muslim female they knew who had recently completed or was completing their B.Ed. in Ontario. Once I received a response to my emailed letter of invitation, I sent potential participants a Consent Form and arranged an

interview time and place. Five people responded to the invitation; however, I was only able to arrange interviews with four. The fifth interview was not manageable given our conflicting schedules over the spring. I tried to accommodate her schedule by arranging time in the summer, but she was not available during those months either.

Three participants requested that the interview take place during their break times at their workplace. Most were able to fit me in during their breaks because I informed them from the outset that interviews will range from 45 minutes to 1 hour. All of the participants were employed by various small Islamic schools in the GTA. As a result of my familiarity with the community and the schools, I did not face any obstacles meeting the participants in offices and prayer halls. Many Islamic schools double as mosques or community centres, and so they are open to people of the community. Only one participant wanted the interview conducted in her home to accommodate her young children. Having known her in previous years, I felt comfortable interviewing her at her home. All four participants were fairly young and ranged from 24 to 36 years of age. Two of the participants were married, while the other two were single and living at home with their parents. Although I would have liked a range of participants in terms of ethnicity, I was only able to receive responses from three people of South Asian descent and one of Arab descent. I provide brief summarized demographic data for each participant below. Demographic data must be sought out and included for both the researcher and the readers of the study (Creswell, 2002). It is important to understand the backgrounds of the participants so their experiences and perceptions can be placed within a context.

Detailed Description of Participants

Nadia

- 36 years old
- Born in Pakistan
- Wears niqab
- Married with children
- Immigrated to Canada in her adult years
- Raised in Pakistan within a large family where she also completed her undergraduate degree

Amna

- 25 years old
- Born in India, but raised in Canada
- Wears hijab
- Single and living with parents
- Completed all of her education in Canada

Aisha

- 24 years old
- Born and raised in Canada
- Of Indian ethnic origin
- Wears hijab with abaya
- Married
- Completed all higher education in Canada

Sana

- 26 years old
- Born in Egypt and of Egyptian origin
- Raised in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Canada
- Wears hijab
- Single and living with parent and siblings
- Completed all higher education in Canada

All four participants were interviewed once for forty-five minutes to an hour. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by myself. I sent individual transcripts to all participants as a form of member checking (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All participants were given the opportunity to read over the transcripts and edit anything they felt misconstrued their intended meanings. None of the participants, however, requested any changes to be made. In fact two of the participants showed a reluctance to read over the transcripts as they were quite lengthy. I encouraged them to do so at their own time so that the research maintained its integrity.

Researcher's Location

My personal interest in this study has to be made clear as research cannot be completely free of bias (Chapman, 2005). Critical research involves an interviewer who is reflective and aware of their position in the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2002). Conversely, it is necessary to reflect on my position so as to make myself more transparent (Okolie, 2005). Reflecting and being self-aware of my personal interests and views regarding this study will help me have more control over preventing my bias from spilling over into the interviews. This does not mean however, that I am trying to make

this study neutral; rather, I do not want to influence the participants to give me certain answers. I want to hear what they are thinking. My analysis of the interviews will be biased as I am taking the position of social justice, a position that both CRM and CRF mandate in research for the purposes of centralizing minority experience and empowering the marginalized (Berry, 2009).

For the purposes of becoming self-aware, I reflected on my experiences as a Muslim woman. I chose to become a more visible Muslim in 2000 by donning the headscarf. My experiences and daily interactions changed, however, somewhat drastically, after 9/11. Being a visible Muslim became more important than my brown skin colour or South Asian ethnicity. Prior to 9/11, all of my experiences with racism and oppression had revolved around my colour and ethnic name; however, post 9/11, those cultural factors did not matter as much as did my religious affiliation with Islam. A piece of material on my head (the hijab) became a powerful social marker that began to colour my daily interactions in a negative way. I do not, however, come from a hopeless approach. Although I have spent a lot of time questioning my identity and place in Canada, and examining the balancing act of being Muslim and Canadian, I have come to a more positive realization. Ten years after 9/11, despite the prevalence of Islamophobia, I do not see any contradictions in being Muslim and Canadian. I also believe that although social justice in education cannot be achieved easily, it is not impossible either as there are many dedicated people in this field working towards equity and justice. We have to move forward and face systems of oppression through research like this for the purpose of dismantling such systems.

Research Procedure

In this section, I outline the steps of interviewing and data analysis. The following procedure was crafted after careful consideration of Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) interview methodology, as well as in consideration of various examples of critical race and anti-racist research in the field of education.

Data Collection

I prepared a list of questions that relate to the CRT themes covered in the literature review. The interviewer must know, prior to the interviews, what they are looking for and how they will bring the conversations back to the central themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Appendix A contains a list of interview questions. I also kept a researcher's journal of reflections that I recorded after the interviews while the conversations were still fresh in my mind. The journals centred on knowledge shared, new ideas, and questions that arose. The journals were also a way to keep my interpretations of the data separate from the interviews.

As stated earlier, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews. These interviews were done face to face because visual and physical interaction is just as important as the conversations themselves (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The expressions and gestures of the participants add deeper meanings to the conversations; meanings that may be significant in the final analysis (Tilley, 2003). Interviewers must consider the possible loss of information when conducting phone interviews over face to face interviews. Irvine (2011) found that interviews by phone were on average shorter than face to face interviews. Decreased responsiveness on part of the interviewee was the cause of the shorter interviews. Irvine (2011) also found that researchers had higher

proportions of talk time during phone interviews than face to face interviews. In light of these findings, I ensured that I booked interviews in person only. The interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes. My personal impressions of body language and expression were written in a researcher's reflective journal after the interviews were complete.

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed by myself. As the study is relatively small, the data can be transcribed without the need of a professional transcriber. Also, the actual conversation is what needs to be analyzed and interpreted rather than the interpretation of typed dialogue (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). By transcribing the interviews myself, I was able to make the transcription more accurate as I was there when it happened. The minor inflections, pauses, gestures meant more to me and my understanding of the conversation, but it may have been missed or excluded if the conversation was transcribed by a third party (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Contrary to popular assumptions, both Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Tilley (2003) assert that transcribing is not a neutral or objective process. It is a process laden with the "interpretive/analytical/theoretical" suppositions of the transcriber (Tilley, 2003, p. 752). The researcher transcribes the interviews as part of their analytical framework because transcribing is partially an act of analysing and interpreting oral data. Tilley (2003), however, also acknowledges the difficulties of transcribing within time and financial constraints. I also decided against using voice recognition software because of financial constraints and the time constraints of learning the new software.

I was actually quite eager to transcribe as I wanted to be fully involved in this important aspect of the research process. I tried my utmost to represent the interview as

it happened. In addition to writing verbatim, I also jotted down in brackets any significant pauses, smiles or sadness the participant showed during the dialogue. I found it, however, very difficult to figure out where to punctuate at times. I felt that I was changing their thoughts or the general sense of the conversations if I misplaced commas and periods. As a result, much of the transcripts were written without punctuation unless there was an obvious pause or break in the conversation. The transcription process was quite lengthy. After the initial transcription, I reviewed my work by listening again and correcting any mistyped or missing information. I then reviewed it for the third time to edit the punctuation.

Interview transcriptions and initial interpretations were then sent back via email to interviewees for the process of member checking. Member checking allows participants to review the data to ensure that the researcher captured the intended meaning from the interviews (Creswell, 2000). I also attempted to schedule one feedback session with the participants so that they could discuss their thoughts and feelings about the outcome and ask me any additional questions. I limited the feedback sessions to one per participant out of respect for the time line of this project and the time of the participants.

Participants should not feel overburdened by the study and I had to respect their busy schedules (Amin, 2005). Feedback sessions were offered in person, over email and/or phone to reduce the hardship of travelling and setting up meeting times. All participants however, expressed their reluctance to engage in a deeper discussion because of time.

Considering that the interviews took place in the spring of 2013 and I did not email transcripts out until August, I can understand their reluctance to re-visit the topic. I also understand for teachers August and September are especially busy and stressful times of

the year as they are preparing for the new school year. However, all participants responded to the transcripts and summaries by confirming my interpretations and negating the need for further feedback.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations must be taken into account when research involves human subjects. Those who agree to participate do so with some level of trust along with other motives such as interest. The researcher must ensure that the trust is not broken by a) breaking participant anonymity, b) revealing information shared off the record (unless information has potential to cause harm or is illegal), c) participant should not feel pressured to respond a certain way and d) the researcher should maintain professional conduct at all times (Creswell, 2002). In consideration of the rights of the participants, I had to obtain a clearance from Brock University's Research Ethics Board before I initiated the interviews. The clearance was granted in the spring of 2013 (REB file #: 12-178-MOGADIME)

At the outset, participants read and signed a letter of consent which allowed me to interview them for the purposes of this research. From the letter of consent, the participants were informed of the general purpose of the research, the interview process and any potential risks from participating (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I did not foresee and nor did I experience any particular risks in this research because the interviews took place in a confidential manner. Participants also gave consent to use the interview data for my M.Ed., research, for presentations at academic conferences and lastly for publication in academic research journals. Participants were given a chance to read over their interview transcripts and remove or edit anything they felt was necessary.

Participants were also informed in the consent letter that they held the right to withdraw from the study if necessary at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

For the purposes of anonymity in the final thesis, I chose pseudonyms for the interview process. Also, descriptions of the participants were generalized and categorized into themes so that participants are not identifiable. The educational institutions as well as the practicum sites in which they were placed during their teacher education program were not named. In fact, I found that I also had to rename cities and other specific locations to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were also informed that all interview data will be stored for one year after the publication of the thesis after which it will all be destroyed. Participants were also informed that this is not a completely anonymous study as I know their identities. Their personal identifying information, however, is stored where only I have access. This information too will then be destroyed by the allotted time period.

Understanding the experiences of the participants from their perspective requires that the data is presented correctly. To do so, participants were given copies of the transcripts and interpretations as a form of member checking. Member checking is an ethically important step for the researcher to conduct. By member checking, researchers avoid misinterpretation of the participants and their experiences. In addition, the process of member checking creates the space for the participants to actively contribute to knowledge production (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Member checking adds to the transparency of the research process thus upholding the integrity of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

It is important that participants walked away from the study feeling positive about the experience. Especially because this study is embedded in a framework of social justice and bringing the marginal to the centre; participants must feel like their voices have been properly heard in a respectful manner.

Data Analysis

After reviewing the literature on data analysis for qualitative research, I found that there is no standard method of data analysis concerning interviews (Dierkx de Casterle, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2011). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) dedicate a chapter on analysing data with a mixture of techniques rather than analysing data with a fixed methodology (p. 233). Daniel (2005) further asserts that African-centered feminism provides for a more enriched analysis than the “Euro-masculine” approach (p. 72). Analysis based on race and intersectionality is more pertinent to data about marginalized people of colour. Daniel (2005) states that race based methodologies offer “multiple centres from which the data can be analyzed” (p. 72). For the purposes of this research, I have outlined the steps of analysis that support a multi-centered approach as defined by Daniel (2005, p. 72). In addition, I tried to ensure that the unique stories and voices from the interviews were not lost in the process of transcription and analysis (Dierkx de Casterle et al., 2011).

Transcribed interviews were coded for thematic and conceptual analysis. The process of coding is lengthy and intensive as it took several readings of the transcripts. Coding developed from the grounded theoretical approach to data (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Coding involves breaking down data into conceptual categories that can be analysed and compared (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). I conducted “data driven coding”, a

process of developing codes while reading the interview material (p. 202). There are various computer programs used for coding and analysis; however, interpretations cannot be done by a computer program. In addition, researchers have to prepare codes to put into the computer programs; thus, the use of such programs does not completely eliminate lengthy work by paper and pen (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2011). Over-reliance on computer programs may also simplify the final results; a problem researchers face with the growing market of software promising detailed and in-depth analysis of interviews (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2011; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). In light of the aforementioned considerations and the lack of finances and equipment, I did not use any computer programs to code or analyse interviews.

Beginning the process of coding was quite daunting, especially since I wanted to make certain that I did not miss anything vital during the process. I initially re-read interviews as a whole for the general meaning. The second time I read them, I went through a process of initial coding in which I combined the various methods of coding presented by Saldana (2009). Although Saldana reviews the descriptive code, in vivo code, and initial code, he refers to these first steps as just coding for the sake of simplicity. While reading, I underlined resonant terms and material that answered my research question (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2011). I highlighted key terms and phrases that identified distinct passages of the transcripts. I then created various matrices of the codes to compare and contrast between all four interviews. This step was a personal choice as I am more comfortable with data summarized in tables as opposed to paragraphs. I then tried to group codes under various categories and then themes (Saldana, 2009). Again, I preferred to create a matrix of categories and themes so that I

could compare and contrast between interviews easily. Finally, I tried to look at how the themes were connected and I tried to “articulate the essence of the interviewee’s story in answer to the research questions” (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2011, p. 363). During this process, I worked in a cyclical fashion by moving back and forth through transcripts and coded data to ensure completeness (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Concepts were then analysed and explained through the lens of CRT. Each code, with the interview citations, were analysed from each interview. The final steps involved the creation of a “conceptual framework” that answers the research questions (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2011, p. 368).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also point out that interpretation is an essential and ongoing activity throughout the interview process. Further, interpretations by the interviewer need to be shared with the interviewee in a dialogical manner. In this manner, knowledge construction is a shared activity where the interviewee is a co-participant (Okolie, 2005).

I found various themes that can be used to frame future discussions of religion, education, and racism. Many of the themes I found were directly related to those outlined in the literature review; however, new themes more specific to the Muslim Canadian context also become apparent.

Limitations of Study

This study focuses on the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates in Ontario teacher education programs. I would have liked to have been able to track both male and female candidates, but most teacher candidates are female, reducing the likelihood of finding willing Muslim male participants for this study. Comparing experiences of male

and female Muslim candidates would give a more holistic view of their experiences. Another limitation of this study is the number of participants. This study focused specifically on the four participants interviewed and their personal experiences. This study highlights the minority voice; however, it is not a study that can generalize all Muslim experience or generalize the direction all teacher education programs should take. This study is also specific to place (Ontario); however, the phenomenon of Islamophobia alongside growing immigrant and second generation Muslim populations is happening in many parts of Canada, U.S., Europe and Australia (Niyozov & Plum, 2009). Further studies on a larger scale are needed to examine the accommodation of religious diversity in public schools and teacher education programs.

Restatement of Objective

Using CRM, I uncovered and examined the experiences of Muslim teacher candidates in pre-service programs in order to gain a better understanding of religious diversity in teacher education programs. By using the voices of the Muslim teacher candidates, I illustrate the unique experiences of these candidates in relation to the accommodation (or lack thereof) of their religious identity specifically within teacher education institutions in Ontario.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter examines various themes that emerged from the interview data. The discussions during the interviews were rich and filled with complexity as everyone's stories and perceptions were unique to their life experiences. There were many expectant themes that emerged, as well as some that had not received significant thought prior to the interviews. I was also pleasantly surprised at the amount of emotion participants displayed during the discussions. Although there were some sad or intense moments that the participants recalled, there were also happy moments and moments of victory we could smile about. The use of in-depth semi-formal interviews suited a Critical Race Feminist (CRF) approach because it allowed the participants to speak as subjects of their experiences. I focused on the participants' every day experiences with race and identity prior to and during the B.Ed. program (Essed, 2001). I divided the themes regarding their everyday life experiences into three broad categories which are as follows: i) experiences of race and racism prior to entering the B.Ed. program, ii) experiencing the B.Ed. program in the university setting, iii) and experiencing the B.Ed. program through the practicum components in Ontario's public schools. Within each of these broad categories are themes as illustrated by Table 1 below.

Separating the data into distinct themes was at times a difficult task as they are all interrelated. For example, I had initially classified veiling as a separate theme, but then realized upon further revision that it was best discussed as part of each theme where it occurs. I also had to revise the themes numerous times because I found myself diverging and discussing important and reoccurring themes, but that were not necessarily related to the focus of teacher education in this study. The aforementioned categories and themes

Table 1

Description of Categories and Themes

| Categories | Themes |
|--|---|
| Prior to entering the B.Ed. program. | Racism & Islamophobia |
| Experiencing the B.Ed. program in the university setting. | University racial climate Student/faculty makeup Accommodation for diversity Silence and Racism LGBTQ & teacher education Importance of dialogue |
| Experiencing the B.Ed. program through the practicum components. | Diversity & racial climate of school settings Interaction with students and parents |

as illustrated by Table 1 captured the experiences in their intricate and interconnected forms and allowed for further analysis and theorizing.

The first category of themes includes racialized experiences prior to entering the B.Ed. program. Some of the racist incidences were related to skin colour and ethnicity as the incidences occurred prior to their decision to veil and become visible Muslims. Other incidences were related to veiling with the headscarf and/or face veil. Racist incidences greatly influenced the participants' feelings about entering new and unfamiliar institutions for their B.Ed. programs.

The second category includes the various experiences during the B.Ed. programs in a university setting. Under this broad topic, I specifically examine how the participants experienced the racial climate of the program as well as their daily interactions with the professors and their peers. I borrow the term "racial climate" from Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso's (2000) study of campus racial climates in American colleges. The particular themes I discuss are: how participants perceive diversity and marginalization in university versus at work or in public spaces, the racial diversity of student body and faculty, accommodation for diversity, silence and racism, LGBTQ in education and lastly, the importance of dialogue.

The third category of practicum experiences is similar to the previous; however, I develop it by examining how the participants interacted with the racial climates of school settings, teachers, students and parents during their two practicum components. Three themes in this area include the racial diversity of staff and students at their placement schools, diversity and inclusion and thirdly, positive interactions with students and parents of colour.

The rest of this chapter explores each of these themes in further detail using interview data collected from the four participants. The interview data was lengthy and complex with intricate details. I tried my best to respect their voices by making only minimal and necessary changes to the data for the purpose of readability and clarity while maintaining accuracy of their intended meanings (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). I chose to take out repetitive phrases and formalize colloquial speech because researchers in critical qualitative studies have expressed concern with readers misreading the vernacular and/or not taking the interviewees seriously. Removing and editing repetitive words, slang and vocal pauses helps prevent this type of misrepresentation of the interviewees (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). This qualitative study focuses on the meanings of the interview data, rather than on analysis of language itself; thus, I felt confident in making these changes while maintaining the integrity of the data (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). In addition, participants referred to their instructors of the B.Ed. program as either professors or instructors; I left most of these references alone as they are often used interchangeably by the participants to refer to their course instructors. In hindsight, I would have liked to clarify whether it was indeed a professor (someone holding a doctorate working full-time with the university) or an instructor (qualified hired staff from various school boards on temporary basis) who taught the courses. This distinction could be helpful when considering the research on how anti-racist education is disseminated in B.Ed. programs (Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008).

Experience with Race and Racism Prior to the B.Ed. Program

Before addressing the theme of racism, it is important to give details about the demographics of participants so that their experiences can be understood from their

racialized place in society. The participants are all women of colour from various ethnic/cultural backgrounds in addition to being visible Muslims with headscarves and veils. Although I initially collected information about their backgrounds for the purpose of establishing demographic data for the study, I found that participants had significant and elaborate discussions about their backgrounds and how they identify themselves. My interviewees experienced difficulty with labeling themselves with specific identities that define nationality, ethnicity and culture. They had to discuss at length what their hybridity (multiple cultural identities) meant to them, how they fit into Canada, and how Muslim identities further complicate that hybridity experienced by people of immigrant parents or foreign backgrounds in Canada (Bhabha, 1994). In addition to this negotiation in the in-between or liminal space, the participants try to define themselves amidst racialized tropes about Muslims perpetuated by the media (Amin-Khan, 2012; Bhabha, 1994; Mogadime, Ramrattan Smith, & Scott, 2011). The following table summarizes the demographics of the participants of this study. I have listed the participants in alphabetical order in the table; however, it is important to note that they do not appear in the rest of the study in alphabetical or any other particular order. I discuss each participant as needed in relation to the themes stated in the headings of each section.

Racism and Islamophobia

In this section, I explore how racism affected the participants' perceptions and expectations of attending their teacher education programs in an unfamiliar environment and institution. Amna, a woman of colour and Indian background did not wear a veil until she started university. Amna remembered examples of racism because of her brown skin and culture from her childhood in school. Amna's experiences were racial

Table 2

Participant Demographics

| Pseudonym | Age | Ethnic Origin | Time Spent in Canada | Education | Visibility as a Muslim |
|-----------|-----|---------------|---|---|--|
| Aisha | 26 | Indian | -Born and raised in Canada | -All but 5 th grade in Canada | -Wears a headscarf -has brown skin |
| Amna | 24 | Indian | -Born in India and raised in Canada | -All Canadian | -Wears a headscarf -has brown skin |
| Nadia | 36 | Pakistani | -Born and raised in Pakistan -recent immigrant to Canada | -All completed in Pakistan with only her B.Ed. in Canada | -Wears a headscarf plus a face veil -has brown skin |
| Sana | 24 | Egyptian | -Born in Egypt and spent most of her life in Canada | -Elementary years in Saudi Arabia -High school onwards in Canada | -Wears a headscarf -has olive skin |

microaggressions that consisted of subtle or covert speech/actions from teachers that made her feel disliked in the classroom (Solorzano et al., 2000). After veiling, Amna felt that her headscarf became the focus of racist experiences. Amna defined everyday racism as the negative comments said to her in public by strangers or being subjected to derogatory comments during job interviews because of her headscarf. Having experienced various episodes of racism, Amna came into the B.Ed. program fearful of how people, peers and professors were going to perceive her or treat her:

I used to be really intimidated, [I felt that] I'm wearing hijab [headscarf] and they are going to judge me right away. That was a main concern for me for sure, they know I'm Muslim. Through teacher's college I was thinking this and I [was thinking] "are they really going to hire hijabis [women in headscarves]"? When I used to go to school and my placement, I used to look around [and think] "there is no hijabi teacher in this school at all"... You do think about it right?

Amna's entry into the B.Ed. program was an exciting opportunity tinged with negativity based on her life experiences as a visible minority. Amna expected to be misjudged by strangers and she expected very little success career wise once her program was completed.

Aisha grew up in a very homogenous suburban area of Ontario. She recalled having two friends in school, one an Arab girl and the other Pakistani. The rest of her peers were white. She recalled the environment in general was more hostile than friendly towards people of colour or any other visible minority. Specifically about school, Aisha recalled various Islamophobic incidences she experienced. She did not approach teachers

about her problems because she felt that racism was just a normal part of society and that there would be very little done by the teachers:

I remember I never told the teacher because to some extent I was scared of the kids and because it was like *everyone*, it was the mentality there.

When asked if she could relate specific incidences of racism, Aisha faltered and became visibly upset as she shared her stories. This was a difficult part of the interview for Aisha because she had not thought about her childhood during school in a long time:

I'd just be walking in the halls and they'd be like "paki, paki, paki, what's that on your head?" That was around the time 9/11 stuff was happening so when my dad would pick me up from school they would call my dad "bin Laden"... some guy threw his binder on me. Then the office took care of it, but then you know, it was embarrassing.

During the interview, Aisha could not continue with her examples because she was overcome by emotion at recalling the humiliation and violence directed towards her Muslim identity. In contrast, though, Aisha also related that she had more positive experiences in university for her undergraduate degree. She did not experience any racial hostility or violence during her undergraduate years as she had in high school. Although she was still apprehensive about fitting in with a new group of people, she was not as fearful.

Sana related various incidences of racism in her life before and after wearing hijab. Once she began talking, she did not want to stop. Sharing these stories seemed to help her vent her feelings of anger. Sana's incidences all took place in public. As I reread the transcripts, I realized that Sana and Nadia are more independent than Aisha

and Amna, and they travel public spaces more than Aisha and Amna. Sana and Nadia were able to relate more stories that were still fresh in their minds because of the greater occurrence of racist incidences on public transportation or in public areas. Sana shared stories of racism both before and after she started veiling; however, Sana's most scary experiences with racism were after she started veiling. It was recalling these particular incidences that Sana became upset and angry thinking about how she was treated by strangers just because she is a visible Muslim. In the following incident, Sana initially felt comfortable wearing an abaya (black full-sleeved dress) in public to volunteer at a local high school. In hindsight, she felt that the combination of her abaya and hijab was the cause of the extreme reaction of a passerby. In fact, Sana was so shaken up by the ordeal that five years later, she still avoids wearing an abaya in public:

One time I was volunteering at a high school and I was on my way home and on that day I had worn an abaya. This is one of reasons why I kind of shy away from wearing abayas now. . . And I was walking down the street going to catch the bus and I feel this car slow down next to me. So I'm like this person probably wants directions or is lost or something. So I kind of slow down and I look and he starts cussing at me like crazy and inside is this [young] white guy... He starts cussing at me so I just turned around and keep walking, and then he's still going slowly next to me cussing as loud as he can and he starts honking and stuff, and then more cars are coming ... There's only one lane and...there are more cars; he's causing a traffic jam at this point and he's still doing it. So then I stop and [I said] "Just stop, go away and leave me alone or I'll call the cops" and then he went, left.

Other cars were honking as well. So he caused such a big scene, and for what?

Just because I'm walking down the street in an abaya?!

Sana faced more incidences and at one point realized that she had to defend herself so that the perpetrators stop. It is interesting to note that in her stories, the more frightening incidences took place with white men as the perpetrators. Another story she related, similar to the one above, also included a white man who was cursing her, following her, and physically intimidating her by invading her personal space. Sana's experiences and feelings about racism left her feeling helpless about the situation for marginalized people. She felt that people are just racist and maybe do not know how else to be; racism is normal part of her life:

And the thing is, I don't even believe that you can be like not racist... I think everyone has it to a degree but it becomes a problem when you start judging people and treating them negatively because of it... I don't think you can eliminate it from the world.

Whether in public, at work or in a B.Ed. program, Sana is fully aware of racism being a daily experience ranging from racial micro- to macroaggressions from Islamophobic strangers (Solorzano et al., 2000).

Nadia's experiences in Canada left her quite anxious and fearful of entering a Canadian university for the first time for her B.Ed. program. She questioned herself many times and turned to prayer when she felt that she would not succeed in furthering her education and career aspirations. Being relatively new to Canada, she arrived approximately five years ago, she was unsure of what to expect in a new country with a different culture. She was fearful of public spaces but she had to attend to her daily

affairs and errands as a mother of young children. Nadia experienced many racist incidences in public spaces as she is a very visible Muslim with her niqab (face cover).

Nadia related the following incidents:

I think initially when I landed here I was just too scared to actually even go in public, and certain things happened when I came here within first few months that really, that was disturbing... in the buses, in the malls, in the play areas, it was not easy initially. Like once I was standing at the bus stop with my kids, just two of them, he wasn't born [pointing to her sleeping toddler] and there were some boys, high school boys, they were passing by. I don't know what they decided among themselves but two of them are on their bike and probably they made a bet or something but they started shouting something. And then they passed very close to me as if they were about to hit me. So I got really scared and I pulled my kids behind me. I don't know why they did it. And another day just within a week I think, I was in McDonalds in the play area with them [her children], and I was going in and the other father was going out with his two kids. Then as he was coming out he just said "ghooooosst" you know. So his kids started laughing and I was entering at that time so it was very disturbing; my kids also noticed and heard what he said... And then in the last building where we used to live there was this one lady who just could not bear me at all... and she started shouting "why don't you go back to your home, you don't belong here, go back to your country" ... I mean it was hard in that way. Even going to university, this was something that was really disturbing me. I didn't want to have the same experiences.

Nadia's experiences illustrate how travelling across public space is very different for people of colour or marginalized people than it is for white people. Marginalized people are not always sure that they will be safe or treated fairly. It takes greater effort and preparation to leave the safety of one's home and traverse various spaces (hooks, 1995). Nadia's experiences took place in a very diverse city in the GTA yet she still faced various racist obstacles in her daily activities. Nadia and Sana similarly related that simple occasions outside became moments of racial hate and danger. It was not just an act of racism though, it was compounded by the fact these women were being intimidated by men, making the encounter even more fearful and dangerous. It was a combination of fears of being overpowered or assaulted by men with the fear of harm instigated by racism.

All four participants felt some sort of apprehension or fear about starting the B.Ed. program in a new and unfamiliar environment because they were not sure of how strangers would treat them given their past experiences with racism. Fortunately though, all four participants found that much of their anxiety about entering a new institution quickly dissipated once they began their programs.

Experiences During the B.Ed. Program

In this section, I specifically look at experiences during the B.Ed. in the university setting. Experiences in the B.Ed. program included a range of events and participants viewed events differently from their own perspectives. Also, within the 45 minutes to an hour long interviews, they only shared what they felt was most relevant to themselves. Overall, six salient themes emerged despite the differences in their stories and that all

participants attended different institutions. In this section, I examine the following six themes:

1. university racial climate,
2. student and faculty diversity,
3. accommodations for diversity within the program/institution,
4. silence and racism,
5. religious diversity and LGBTQ rights in teacher education,
6. and the importance of dialogue between diverse groups.

University Racial Climate

Three of the four participants had generally positive things to say about university life and culture. Once overcoming their initial apprehension about attending a new institution, many were pleasantly surprised by the accommodating culture of university. As they faced fewer challenges than expected, they were mostly positive about their time in teacher education. When I was reading over the transcripts, it seemed the participants believed that university offered a very different type of world than the ‘real’ world. University was filled with opportunity and an open minded approach to life whereas socio-economic spheres outside of university are filled with struggle and success is hindered by racism. All of the participants declared that despite whatever comfort or inclusion they felt in the B.Ed. program, they were certain to face Islamophobia in the work place that would hinder their ability to obtain jobs with public school boards.

Amna described how there were moments of fear or nervousness during the program. Due to her prior experiences with racism, she feared being excluded by peers

or racially targeted. She also, however, described moments of when she was surprised and excited about her peers being open-minded about her practice of Islam:

So one day... we had to pray before class... usually we take ten minutes at the beginning of the afternoon class [to pray elsewhere] but something was happening in the afternoon class so we had to be there, so we prayed while everyone was there [in the cafeteria]...everyone was trying to not look. It was really funny their expressions were really funny. But anyway a few girls asked ... some of them already know. Anyway, we actually had a discussion about prayer and what we do and it was pretty cool actually. It was good. It was nice to explain to them and they understood; they were really open and stuff.

Aisha made similar comments about her program when she explained:

I feel like the people that were there, they were just open minded, they were accepting and they were interested and that [university] itself tried to bring out the culture in people. They would make us do things ... like we used to have to teach something about ourselves. For example, I did henna and stuff like that and everyone was very open and accepting and stuff like that.

Again, both Amna and Aisha felt happy they could share something of their culture with people who were open to listening. They felt their time in university was easier socially because the culture in general was accepting of diversity.

Nadia also shared similar thoughts about university in general. Nadia mentioned how the composition of the university population may be related to why university culture is more accommodating and friendly than public spheres in general:

In public I think it's hard for people to be that accommodating sometimes. But I think in university it was more a student body sort of thing, young, they're very accommodating and the [professors are accommodating]; so that was a good experience.

All four participants mentioned how, regardless of how welcomed they were in the B.Ed. program, they felt helpless about their career situations once they graduated. They believed that racism is a part of their lives and it will also affect their economic success and social mobility (Kazemipur, 2012; Razack, 2008). For example, Aisha, who was very excited about her experience in the B.Ed. program ended on a negative note by stating:

I think it is important to note though that even though my teacher education was so successful and stuff, I still feel like for me to get a job in the public school board would be super difficult just because I'm a minority. Like at the end of the day that's what [my] goal would've been...I applied right when I got out and then I know like there's barely any chance of getting in... now I'm happy here [Islamic private school] and whatever but I don't see it... even if we saw hijabi teachers in the public school board, in my opinion it's rare.

Amna gave a very interesting example of her professor preparing them for the outside world when he affirmed that racism exists in the field of education, and being visibly Muslim will affect one's chances of being hired as a teacher:

Okay, so I remember my professor one day, he was so blunt. He was like "a male with a beard, a big beard, who visibly looks Muslim is not likely to get a job than someone who is [not visibly different], especially in this profession". He said it

straight up he's like “because of all the stereotypes that exist about Muslims,” and he said that straight up while we were in the class. He didn't care he said it. We got really open at that point. Yeah he said it.

In another interview excerpt, Amna talked about her feelings of hopelessness against an entire system of racism in Canadian society. Amna felt that in university people acknowledge that injustice exists and such topics are discussed but to no avail in the larger social sphere.

Everything we talk about we already know. Yes [racism] exists in our society, yes it's there, but at the end of the day when you do go for a job or you do go apply, everything falls apart. You think I'm going to be strong but then you can't. It's hard. You still think about it. No matter how much you talk about it, it's still in you I guess...you have those fears I guess.

Despite the amount of work by the Ministry of Education to promote equity in education, Aisha and Amna still felt from their experiences that it just was not enough (Ministry of Education, 2009). They ultimately hold a negative view on how much change has taken place. Certainly various equity initiatives are not without criticism but anti-racism education and critical race theories are vast areas that are affecting change in education (Harper, 1997; Ministry of Education, 2009). Aisha and Amna were focusing on the general lack of economic success experienced by Muslims in Canada despite their high levels of education (Kazemipur, 2012). Their cultural experiences outweigh any advances in the field of education in terms of employment policies.

Sana discussed a similar type of anguish about the theory she learned in university versus the practice of injustice in society. Her professor would discuss justice, racism

and diversity during their ethics course. For the final course project, the professor asked the students to summarize what they have learned and how they will apply it to their teaching identities. Sana had the following to say about the course and her reflection on the course content:

Actually it [ethics course] got me very pessimistic... I have all this information, I know this, lots of people know this but nothing is being done [about racism]. Even if there is something being done there are always people that are against it and they're bigger in charge... You know I just started doubting everything... we were meant to be in this state so we fight, and we're busy, and we don't think about other things and all that...[it] got me really pessimistic...

Similarly, Nadia said the following about reality versus the theoretical discussions in her ethics course:

It's more verbal than put in action. They talk about these accommodations but I don't know, you could never understand what this [veiled] girl is going through. Just because of the way she looks, the way she dresses up, the way she speaks or the way she keeps her distance, you understand? I don't know. So I don't even expect the other person to understand that actually. So his reaction, her reaction is perfectly justified because he doesn't know. Literally, I just give them the benefit of not knowing such things and I stay quiet because ...they cannot understand so why argue or why [explain oneself].

In this quote, Nadia referenced her course in which her professor discussed various types of accommodations teachers have to make for students from all backgrounds and abilities. Nadia felt that all of the discussion and feelings of empathy that transpired

during class could never really amount to true understanding because a person from a background of power could never feel or experience what a marginalized person experiences. Looking at this dialogue, I was surprised to see that Nadia almost made an excuse for the behaviour of others by justifying it as ignorance. She felt no need to argue or correct others; instead she stayed silent as she felt she could never really make them understand her point of view.

During these dialogues with participants, I found that they were talking about the inadequacy of anti-racist education or any social justice based education in producing any real exchange of power between the marginalized and the dominant groups of people. According to the participants, any real change is out of the hands of the universities because there are “bigger” people in charge who need to maintain status quo to maintain their power (de Marrais & LeCompte, 1998). From this point of view, anti-racist education becomes just talk; however, I think change will be slow and can only be measured through continuous study of how teachers conduct their practice in light of their exposure to anti-racist education.

Student & Faculty Diversity

In this section, I examine the diversity of the faculty and student body. I found that across all four programs the students spoke about, they mentioned how the majority of the faculty were white. The majority of teacher education cohorts the participants were involved in were also white. I was not surprised with the faculty being all white given the current research on the difficulty of professors of colour being accepted in universities (Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Orelus, 2013; Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009). I was slightly surprised and disappointed that given the growing diversity

in Ontario classrooms, the majority of graduating teachers is still white (Escayg, 2010). Also disappointing was the lack of time appointed to anti-racist education. Diversity was a topic that was discussed in general sporadically or during one ethics/society course only. Discussions about diversity included all types of diversity and isms so again; racism and anti-racist education received little attention. Only Sana's program had any significant focus on racism as that particular ethics course focused on Aboriginal people and education. Table 3 summarizes the setting and structure of the four B.Ed. programs. All of the institutions attended were situated in urban areas; two within the GTA, while the other two were outside of the GTA but within Ontario. All of the institutions had their B.Ed. programs taught by a mostly white faculty.

The particular cohorts that the participants attended had only white professors with the exception of the ethics professor who were of colour in two cohorts. Amna had an interesting description of her student body within her cohort. She described them as being mostly white but with the addition of a defined number of visible minorities. For example, she stated that there were three Black students, three Asian, three South Asian and so forth. Although she looked favourably on their attempt to diversify teacher candidate populations, she also thought it obvious and that the pattern of minority candidates was evident. Important to note though is the fact that universities do not have to meet any sort of quota concerning diversity. Universities may attempt to recruit a more diverse student body, which is what Amna may have seen; however, there is no defined number of minority students a university must take in per program:

I could tell that [the] university had specifically handpicked these individuals around me. It was three Chinese, three Black, it was all a certain number of

Table 3.

B.Ed. Setting, Diversity and Anti-Racist Course Offerings

| | B.Ed. Program 1 (Amna) | B.Ed. Program 2 (Aisha) | B.Ed. Program 3 (Sana) | B.Ed. Program 4 (Nadia) |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Setting: | Urban- inside GTA | Urban – outside of GTA | Urban – outside of GTA | Urban – inside GTA |
| Diversity of faculty: | All white | All white | All white but one professor | All white but one professor |
| Diversity of student body: | Primarily white but had a set number of each ethnic group. Eg. 3 Black, 3 Asian, 3 visible Muslims including herself | Primarily white with 2 visible Muslims including herself and 3 male students of colour | All white but 1 Black female and herself (Arab/visible Muslim) | Primarily white but 4 Asians and 1 visible Muslim being herself |
| Anti-racist course or a course about diversity: | Diversity was sometimes discussed in various courses. | Diversity was an overarching theme of the program. | Diversity and racism were discussed as part of an ethics course. | Diversity was discussed as part of an ethics course. |

people in there. I know they did that. Whereas compared to my other friend who went to [another] university and she said that they were all white [teacher candidates].

Aisha also discussed the purposeful selection of teacher candidates based on diversity. During her year at teacher's college, Aisha stated that her faculty was all white and the student body was all white except for herself and one other person of colour. Upon student feedback however, the university began to rigorously advertise for people of colour. They started with diversifying the pictures on their brochures and other visual media. Aisha was also invited to pose as a model along with another peer who was a visible minority:

But the thing is that the year after me, they intentionally made an effort to get more diversity and even while we were there they had asked us to, do you know how they have those posters and [students] give statements on their [brochures]? So they had actually handpicked students that looked like they were from different cultures and stuff and put them on. I didn't end up doing it; they did ask me to do it but it didn't end up working out. But I know one of the other girls did it, one of the Asian guys, a Black guy, like they did find people so they were trying to promote it...that's because by my year people that had graduated, someone had mentioned that [the university] is not multicultural, so they did end up doing that.

Sana also had a mostly homogenous faculty and student body. Sana found herself feeling isolated from the main student body, but she befriended the one other visible

minority in her cohort. Although they were very different from each other, she felt comfortable with her because they shared experiences of being visible minorities:

Okay so my friend that I made over there was the only other non-white and she was Black... we found each other because we were the two outcasts and in that sense we can relate to each other. So whenever [the class] had any diversity questions or topics like that to talk about, we'd always be like pointed out [by the instructor]. They didn't do it in a mean way, it just so happened. They're like "how about you, your opinion?" They always wanted our opinions because we were the diverse ones.

Sana illustrates how although the professor was trying to build on the experiential knowledge of visible minorities; they felt different from the rest of the population which affected how Sana socialized within the cohort.

Nadia also experienced a mainly white faculty and student body. Despite there being a handful of other minorities in her cohort, Nadia still felt very isolated because of her religious dress which includes a face veil (niqab). She knew that her niqab was a source of debate in Western society and made her exceptionally different from the others. Nadia described her first day in her program filled with anxiety because she could see how much she stood out from everyone else:

So I remember the very first day, the orientation day, I was feeling extremely awkward and lonely because when I look around, I could not even see a single person looking like me.

Nadia also discussed how her niqab made more of a difference than skin colour, accent or any other difference other visible minorities may present:

It was not really the skin colour that made a difference or the way that I would speak... it was definitely just that piece of cloth they could see on my face. That was something you know that really excited them or ignited them or whatever [laughs].

Nadia felt that her niqab created more tension than any other “different” aspect about her. Being the only one with niqab, Nadia felt isolated even from other visible minorities.

These conversations illustrate how the participants still felt “strange” or “different” in their mostly white cohorts. I noted that universities seem to be making a conscious effort to diversify the populations of pre-service teachers but without necessarily addressing the homogeneity within their own faculties. Again, in a province like Ontario, which is home to a large number of immigrants, further work needs to be done to diversify future teaching populations on all levels.

Accommodations for Diversity

In this section, I examine how the participants of this study experienced accommodation for various needs during the program. Much of the accommodation depended on requests by the participants rather than an offering of various services or exceptions. Except for a couple of Nadia’s experiences, other candidates had to ask for accommodations or compromise their practice of religion temporarily until the program was over.

Amna’s classes for her B.Ed. program took place in a high school, so she did not have access to various accommodations that would be available in a university setting, such as prayer space. Amna and her two Muslim friends approached their professor about prayer space; however, they were not provided with any. They were given time off

class as needed, as long as they did not miss anything essential and caught up on their own time. Amna and her friends settled for the cafeteria even though it was at times uncomfortable because it was such a public space:

There was like three of us, three Muslim girls in the class and we went and spoke to the director and she [said] “yes you can pray but we don't have any special place” so we just prayed in the cafeteria after everyone left. It was a wide open space..... Not really [comfortable] because people would walk in anytime.

Other than prayer space, Amna never felt a need to be accommodated and did not experience any hurdles regarding her needs.

Aisha and Sana approached their situation in teacher education differently. They did not seek or ask for accommodation but rather, put aside their needs to accommodate the norms and expectations of their programs. Aisha and Sana thought it more prudent to combine their prayers at a later time or pray whenever they got a chance in any private space they found. Aisha stated that:

I don't think I ever asked for a separate prayer room or something. I know the lockers had an area so I would pray there.

Aisha felt though that a general quiet room or meditation room would have been helpful to accommodate students in general:

This university was a really small campus, I know they didn't have one [prayer room] but I think it would be a good idea to have that. I know that University A had that prayer room and that all religions, anyone who wanted to pray, it would be like a quiet room, you go there, you do whatever your form of prayer was. So if universities were forced to have that I think it would be a good idea.

Here Aisha is making a case for spirituality in general and not just for the Muslim population. Students spend so much of their day in university during their programs; it is hard for them to leave a core component of their daily lives such as prayer or meditation at home. Having a neutral space, like many universities and hospitals, for multi-faith functions is helpful and conducive to inclusive practices.

Nadia had a very different experience concerning accommodation. It is important to note that Nadia did not grow up in Canada, and she has never experienced the need to compromise her cultural/religious practice to fit into the larger mainstream Canadian society. She was very nervous about going to a Canadian university, but once she experienced the initial welcome and accommodation, she felt more confident in asking for accommodation in various areas that many other Muslims may not ask for or feel the need to do so. Nadia's first experience with accommodation occurred on her first day when her professor approached her and asked her about prayer space. She also shared a very touching story of how her professor reached out to her and made her feel very welcomed into the program. She cherished these moments of positive connections because they also helped her face her obstacles from a more positive place:

I tell you one experience that really touched me. The first day I was there on my orientation day...so in the break my program coordinator called me [over] because I was just sitting, everybody left to have coffee or something and I was just sitting on my chair. So she called me [over] and she said, "I know that you need some time and space to pray and we are trying to make some arrangements, right now we don't have any." And I was really shocked. I had not even talked with her about anything [about prayer] or I had to go or take time off or I needed space or

anything.... I was really touched that she, I mean definitely she must've experienced from past years...she was prepared but I wasn't. It was for me "oh wow, this is amazing" and she really touched my heart, feeling the need that I had.

Here Nadia touched on a couple of important points about accommodating diversity in the teacher education program. She described her professor as having previous experience with diversity and knowledge about different cultures. Her professor used her prior knowledge to recognize some of Nadia's needs and advocate for her religious difference. The professor's action made all the difference for Nadia because initially, she doubted whether she should stay in the program at all. Also, Nadia's example highlights the impact of professors offering accommodations rather than waiting to be asked because it is intimidating for individuals from marginalized groups to discuss their needs with authority figures.

It was not always so easy for Nadia. There were times when Nadia had to seek out accommodation because the professors were not aware of her needs. Physical education and music were two classes that Nadia was uncomfortable with. Nadia comes from a background where modesty includes segregated physical education. In addition, Nadia's prescribes to a religious view that prohibits music as entertainment. She was very relieved when she found her professors to be understanding of her request to miss a particular class or components of gym and music class. Initially her program instructor was surprised at her request to miss the music component of the program; however, the music instructor managed to find a way accommodate for her learning. Muslims differ on many points of practice and ideology so it is not surprising that she was the only

Muslim her professor was aware of to ask for exemption from the music component of her B.Ed. program. Her music professor however, was more understanding and accommodating and helped modify some of the expectations for Nadia so that she could pass the component successfully:

I didn't want to go to a single music class, and when I went up to my [professor] and I [said] that I didn't want to take part in that... She said "it's up to you if you want to lose that credit you can, it's up to you." So she never made me comfortable enough to make a decision because I could not see myself being accommodated in that situation at all. She said "I don't know, this has never come up before so I'm not sure, it's up to you if you don't want to take it, don't take it." I mean literally this is what she said. Then I went into the first [music] class and I spoke to my [music professor] and I told her... "as far as the theory part is concerned I would participate but once we get into the practical things, I don't want to be part of it". And she was okay about it. She said "that's okay as long as you can show me your paperwork, its fine." So that's what I did.

Nadia was very passionate about this issue, but it was also very easily accommodated for with the professor accepting written work in lieu of any musical performance or participation, and Nadia agreeing to attend the theoretical components. The position of music in Islam is not conclusive and is open to debate amongst scholars and lay people (Izsak, 2013). The debate is ongoing and it is not the purpose of this study to offer a view that is compatible for music teachers and orthodox Muslims. What is important, however, is to recognize that various opinions on music exist amongst Muslim students in teachers' college and in Ontario classrooms. Accommodations for Muslim

students need to be addressed in a sensitive and open-minded manner as not all Muslims will desire any accommodation depending on their personal belief system.

Silence and Racism

There were times during the program some of the participants felt silenced. They felt that they could not speak up against stereotypical or Islamophobic material in class. In the two incidences that occurred, both participants related that the source of racism was the media. Media has played a significant role in propagating Islamophobic attitudes in the West (Amin-Khan, 2012; Mogadime et al., 2011). The examples of racism that the participants discussed were more about the professors unable to or unwilling to deconstruct the messages from the media before they presented them to their classes. Regardless of the intentions of the professors, they must critically assess their material that they will present to the class so that they can breakdown the stereotypes or racist ideas rather than perpetuating them.

The first example I relate is from Nadia's description of one class discussion about the 9/11 terrorist attack. The teacher's objective for that class was to explain to the pre-service teachers that they must remain calm in all dangerous situations and further, they must think about how they will explain such a situation to their students. Unfortunately, the professor fell back on describing terrorists in the same manner that media has defined Muslims and terrorists as being one group:

I remember that one of the classes, in social studies class, it came up about the 9/11 bombing and everything. And the way my professor was [talking], definitely she didn't mean it but somehow now because we have been affected by the media too, Muslims too. Literally I felt as if she's targeting me by saying all those things

she was saying, "the terrorists, the terrorists, the terrorists, the terrorists, the terrorists..." constantly. This word is sort of equal to Muslims now in media. We know that we are not but somehow it just... you are actually equating me to [a terrorist] but I'm not. I have nothing to do with that event but still I felt very uncomfortable that this is how it happened and it's all because of Muslims...

Nadia continued that the professor never actually named Muslims as terrorists. Instead she said "whoever did it", but Nadia felt that the descriptions of "who did it" were that of how Muslims are described in the media. Nadia said:

She did talk about what message you want to give [about] who did it because the very first thing kids ask is "who did it?" "What do you say?" And on that she said "people who don't love peace, people who" do you understand? It was so much language of the media... So you're using that pronoun, but I know whom you're pointing to because it's the same wording I've been hearing in the news and the newspapers and on Internet and everywhere, so you start relating to it.

Nadia had some difficulty explaining her thoughts and feelings however, the phenomenon she is trying to define is real, it is a reality faced by all Muslims. Nadia explained how although the professor never said the name or word "Muslim"; it was just known by the way she was describing the terrorists that she was in fact discussing Muslims because media uses the same language in reference to Muslims. For example, media will describe Muslims and terrorists as "hating democracy" or the West having to "protect our values and freedoms" from the Muslims/terrorists (Amin-Khan, 2012). Media make both terrorists and Muslims an equal threat to the West through how they describe the threat. Terrorists are a threat because of the violence they commit, but

Muslim populations are also a threat by their very existence and the contrary values they bring with them to the West (Amin-Khan, 2012).

Nadia felt that as a visible Muslim, she was on trial for the terrorism the class was discussing. She felt the burden of the few Muslim criminals, even though she knows that she does not support them or their actions. When asked about whether she voiced her opinions she said she felt she could not so she opted to stay silent:

No I kept quiet and I think the only reason [was that] I was scared, sort of. I was very uncomfortable and I thought that I couldn't even speak my mind because I was getting upset. I knew if I would say something right now I would not be in my senses because I was really getting emotional.

Nadia's silence, although she chose to stay silent, came from a place of oppression because she did not have the courage or the ability to properly challenge the professor or the discussion taking place. Technically, defending Muslims is not her burden but the professor should not have put all Muslims on trial in the first place by perpetuating stereotypes. Interestingly, the silence on the part of the professor about Muslims also worked as oppression because the silence left room for incorrect assumptions about the identity of terrorists. Furthermore, by maintaining silence or a superficial discussion, the topic could not be critically examined and deconstructed; thus, sustaining various stereotypes and tropes about Muslims and terrorists. Although the professor may have had good intentions in avoiding specific labels of Muslims and Islam so that they are not condemned as the guilty party, her language however indirectly named Muslims anyway.

In contrast, Nadia felt that another professor, a visible minority for her ethics course, had discussions on race and in particular Islamophobia that were well received

and informative. In fact, he discussed Islamophobia after some of the students requested for him to do so. Nadia described her professor and his ethics class as follows:

It really broadened my perspective, my mentality of seeing things differently so I was glad that I was in that class and I'm glad the way that professor was... and he really did a good job showing things differently and making us realize the need of accommodating these diversities because of the kind of place we live in...religion was touched upon very slightly, not in detail at all. I think just once he mentioned [Islamophobia] because he used to do some workshops [and] seminars about Islamophobia and people used to really like it, go and get the material from him and his presentation and everything so he just talked about that because there were a few people who were interested in our class to know more.

Again, the excerpt from Nadia's interview illustrates the importance of having professors who can effectively deconstruct racist situations and the power dynamics between the majority and the minority. Nadia also added her appreciation of having one professor who was also a person of colour. Students' performing better when they are able to relate to teachers through commonalities is well established; however, I think this idea needs to be extended to universities where various populations including the majority could also benefit from having a diverse faculty who bring in diverse bodies of knowledge and experiences.

Amna experienced a similar situation as Nadia in which a video was played during one of her classes by her professor. The video contained stereotypical and Islamophobic images of veiled women, oppression, and the war in Iraq. Amna felt

uncomfortable with the stereotypes the video showed; however, Amna still did not want to speak up and challenge what she saw in the video:

There was this video that we watched and it was about the war in Iraq and it was about a girl. I forgot the name of the video but it was really bad because it was saying all these things about Islam. It was a totally different perception. Like the girl, she wants to take off her hijab and then her parents are not letting her. It was just a weird video to show us in class. I don't know the purpose [of the video], I don't remember it was a long time ago. I felt uncomfortable then because people were, even the people who weren't Muslim were like "Why would she show this video to us?" It was a really weird video to show to us and it was all about Muslims there and [it] was a really weird perspective of Islam in there.

Amna was uncomfortable with the how the video depicted Muslims. Amna felt it important that people understand that not all Muslims are like what the video showed especially because Muslims were depicted in a very negative manner. When I asked her if she felt uncomfortable speaking up and explaining her understanding and views she responded:

Yes that was probably the most awkward moment we had. It wasn't just me actually, the other Muslim girl [in the class] was so tough and so talkative and she's good at explaining things. She's the one who had a lot of trouble with them about racism.

Amna mentions another Muslim student who she describes as "tough", tough enough to speak up. Here Amna indicates the challenge of contradicting the professor, regardless of how well intentioned the professor may be, and how strength and bravery are needed to

confront various stereotypes. The courage and eloquence needed are not what everyone feels they have so they opt for silence in face of stereotypes or racism.

Sana also wanted to keep silent most of the time when it came to discussing diversity. Many times the professor asked Sana what she thought and felt being in a minority or marginalized place in society. Again, the professor was well intentioned in wanting the class to hear firsthand from a person of colour/visible Muslim; however, Sana felt silence was better than getting into messy and complicated discussions about racialized experiences:

I hate participating in class and having them ask me a question and for me to have to represent Islam altogether, it really creeped me out. Especially since a lot of my views and stuff, it's not because I'm particularly Muslim ... Islam shaped my opinions but within Islam there are lots of different opinions in of itself so I can't be like "okay, this school of thought says this, this school of thought says that, I think this which is a combination of those two" you know they're [peers and professors] just going to be like "what are you, confused?" you know. They want a black and white sentence or something and I can't give that to them, so I didn't like that aspect to it. And then every time they did ask me something, I would mention "I'm [answering] as Sana, not [a representative of Muslims]... and I'd always put a disclaimer.

Sana felt it a burden to have to represent Islam and the entire population of Muslims.

Sana recognized the danger of representing an entire population and reinforcing monolithic perceptions and stereotypes. She did not think it was fair to be put into that

position and so always stated a disclaimer of sorts before speaking about her opinions or experiences.

All of these conversations with my participants depicted different types of silences and how they can function in maintaining stereotypes or racism. Also illustrated in the conversations is the need for some sort of safe space in which minority students can challenge various ideas presented during class when they feel that they cannot speak in front of a crowd on the spot (Housee, 2010).

Religious Diversity and LGBTQ Rights in Education

Two out the four participants broached the subject of religion and sexual orientation. Both Sana and Nadia acknowledged the tension between aligning religious views on sexual orientation with Canadian secular values of equity. The Ministry of Education (2009) has found that there are an increasing number of students from families with same sex parents. In addition, Bill 13 asserts that all students, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, have the right to education without fear. In this section I examine lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and questioning (LGBTQ) rights in education and how the Muslim women negotiated their religious convictions with the Canadian standards of gay rights in schools and in society at large. This is a delicate area within which I tread carefully and at times, wondered if I should at all. This topic however, was a subject that reoccurred and at one point was discussed at length. It is also an important topic being written about in the general field of education and specifically about Muslim teachers and sex education in schools (Sanjakdar, 2013).

Two out of the four participants brought up LGBTQ in teacher education in response to my interview questions about cultural sensitivity and about feeling silenced

during the B.Ed. program. I was not expecting an answer concerning LGBTQ; however, both participants engaged in complex conversations revealing the diversity within the Muslim community concerning LGBTQ.

I will begin with relating Sana's experience and feelings when LGBTQ was brought up during her B.Ed. program. Sana, when asked if she ever felt her comments or views unwelcomed during the program, responded by saying that she never felt unwelcomed but she did feel awkward with a lesbian peer in her cohort. Sana initially described the situation as follows:

So we were doing a project in one of the classes.....It was just really, really awkward because it was a topic about [LGBTQ] and I know as a teacher you're supposed to accept everyone and everything but I was awkward in the class because I didn't want anyone to ask me anything... I didn't want to have to get into explaining my own beliefs about it. Especially since I was the only Muslim in the class.

Sana understands her role as a teacher in the classroom in terms of justice and equity concerning all students, including LGBTQ students. However, Sana also knows that it is a common knowledge that the most dominant view in Islam about LGBTQ is contradictory to gay rights in the classroom. Both Sana and Nadia, however, were very clear on their roles as teachers and preventing any abuse or bullying of LGBTQ students. Furthermore, both understood the importance of inclusion and respect regardless of personal/religious beliefs. Sana felt her personal views were just those, personal; however, she felt intimidated and fearful that a discussion on LGBTQ would yet become

another venue in which she would have to defend Islam. Sana illustrated her fear by continuing with the following:

...but no one picked on me or anything like that but it was just pretty much a huge discussion about [LGBTQ] and having a really opinionated and strong lesbian in the class whose partner was a lawyer ...made me really nervous about that.

This quote had my attention for a long time. I wondered where Sana's fear about a lesbian lawyer was coming from. Sana seemed to be fearful of discussing Islam and gay rights. She was fearful of the backlash against Muslims from the rest of the cohort knowing that Canada as a nation upholds gay rights; hence, her comment about fearing her lesbian peer's reaction. Sana's comment about not wanting anyone to ask her about her beliefs or religion also indicates that she did not want to be in a position where she would have to defend herself or her religion on this subject. Gay rights discussion in class seemed to be an area of discomfort for both Sana and Nadia.

Nadia's experience was a little different but her thoughts illustrate the complexity behind eliding cultural and religious identities with "foreign" identities as immigrants in Canada. When she was asked about whether diversity was covered in a culturally sensitive manner in her program, she hesitated before bringing up LGBTQ, which she felt could have been approached differently:

I'm not sure if I should say or not as far as your study's concerned but yes, one thing that really was disturbing and I felt like they never put it the way it should have been was homophobia and all of this.

Nadia's uncertainty reflected a fear of discussing a topic like homophobia because of the tensions between religious beliefs and LGBTQ lifestyles. In addition, she was fully

aware of Canadian norms in terms of LGBTQ lifestyles and so she was uncertain of how to approach the topic. Nadia, however, brought up this topic without any prompting from me, three times during the course of the interview. Her discussion revealed a deeper inner conflict she was facing about the acceptance of LGBTQ as a viable lifestyle. As an immigrant from a Muslim country, she comes from a society that mostly condemns LGBTQ lifestyles, so topics about homophobia and justice never occurred in her life. In addition she had to grapple with notions of acceptance and tolerance while trying to adhere to more orthodox interpretations of Islam. It is important to note that in no way did Nadia condone homophobic behaviour or any violent treatment of LGBTQ populations; it was more of a philosophical debate that was the preoccupation:

...that's what I'm saying, I have no issues accepting them as human beings, as what he or she is, but it's just the belief I have a problem with.

Nadia re-stresses her stance against homophobia in another place stating:

I mean I am totally open about the idea that yes, bullying is no way allowed in this situation too, they are after all human beings and we respect them, who they are.

Furthermore, Nadia related an experience during her practicum in which she interacted with a student with same-sex parents. Nadia was able to put aside her personal discomfort about gay lifestyles and tried to address the situation in a respectful manner:

I think it was Mother's Day coming up and we were actually making a small broach for the mothers so there was one child who said "What if you have two mothers?" She said this in the class and it was only me in the classroom at that time so naturally [I thought] I don't know how to answer that; but I said "it's okay

then you make two and that's perfectly fine because you know you could end up in the situation where you actually have two mothers...this is the way you are and this [parental love] is the way other people feel for you." So I mean I don't think I handled things very well because it was spur of the moment so I [answered] just [off the] top of [my] head but I could've answered better and then I later thought about it, what I could have said...I wish I could've handled it better, I couldn't. And it was probably because I have no background at all; I had no previous understanding of [LGBTQ].

In this quote, Nadia points out her lack of preparedness as a source of discomfort. What seemed to bother Nadia about her B.Ed. program was the silence about religion and LGBTQ. Being very new to the topic and open discussion, she found herself looking for further discussion and guidance in this area as a Muslim teacher. She found it “disturbing” that the professor, in her view, did not recognize religious views in the discussion of LGBTQ and homophobia:

I remember that my professors would definitely say things about another [religion] like Catholicism, they wouldn't accept this idea too but it was never Islam that came up as a name or as a religion which actually sort of dislikes or disproves this idea...and I was surprised and that's why even I didn't have the audacity to speak myself.

Nadia felt silenced and unable to discuss the tensions of teaching in an inclusive manner while maintaining her religious convictions. In Canada, education is based on a secular model in which all backgrounds (religious, sexual, ethnic, etc.) are given equal value and one cannot trump the other or be given greater value. In our multicultural society

however, regardless of what Canadian society professes, different perspectives have to be acknowledged and invited into dialogue so that both sides can come to an understanding (Zembylas, Charalambous & Charalambous, 2012). This point is especially important to institutions of teacher education programs that are making efforts to recruit diverse populations so that the teaching population better reflects the diverse student body in Ontario classrooms (Gambhir et al., 2008). Although beyond the scope of this study, I want to highlight that this discussion also reveals the need for Muslim communities to further discuss this topic and alleviate some of the tension and discord some Muslims feel between their religious and Canadian values.

Importance of Dialogue

Three of the four candidates' narratives indicated the importance of dialogue between marginalized and dominant groups of people. This dialogue seemed to bridge the gap in understanding one another. Aisha mentioned that the sharing of cultural artifacts in her cohort helped create a positive attitude towards differences and diversity. Amna also showed happiness when relating her story of explaining her prayer in the cafeteria to non-Muslim girls in the cohort. Their interest and understanding seemed to affirm her place in a positive manner in the cohort. Nadia's narrative about dialogue illustrated how meaningful discussion can change point of views and attitudes, thus opening the door to deeper understanding of anti-racist pedagogy. Nadia shared a poignant story about her interaction with her male peers in her cohort. She recalled that initially there was an uncomfortable silence between her and the male student body. She felt the discomfort came from both sides, they were uncomfortable with her in niqab, and she did not initiate conversation either because of her own personality and a fear of their

reaction. She recalled that things changed however, when she was put into a group with both males and females and they had to share some life experiences. Through this dialogue she felt that the men recognized her as a “human” and she realized they meant no harm; thus, a new relationship based on mutual respect rather than mutual fear began during that discussion. Nadia shared her experience in a lengthy narrative which I have broken down and tried to capture her feelings in the following passages:

...but I felt a certain discomfort from them [male peers] that never let me actually even say hello to them....things changed for me....after that group work that we did together where there were men too and when I explained things to them, how I feel when I’m out in hijab and niqab and how I’m treated sometimes. Some of them were actually very upset about the fact I have experienced such things...so definitely, I felt a soft spot for them as they were feeling a soft spot for me...I’m glad that happened and it really changed things for me.

Nadia said further that after this discussion, her relationship changed with her male peers in a positive manner. She stated that “even the men were a little friendlier and think that I am also human behind this [niqab]...you can actually talk to me”.

Practicum Experiences

The practicum components took place in different settings than the curricular components of the B.Ed. program. Each participant attended two practicum components in two different public schools. I have summarized the general characteristics of each school the participants attended in Table 4. In the rest of this section, I discuss the relationship between diversity and inclusive atmospheres as well as the various experiences of my interviewees with their students and parents.

Table 4.

Diversity and Racial Climate of Public Practicum Schools

| | Faculty | Student Body | Racial Climate |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Amna - Practicum | Diverse | Diverse | Not inclusive |
| 1: | | | |
| Amna - Practicum | Mostly white | Diverse | Not inclusive |
| 2: | | | |
| Aisha - Practicum | Diverse | Diverse | Not inclusive |
| 1: | | | |
| Aisha - Practicum | Mostly white and | Diverse | Very inclusive |
| 2: | young | | |
| Sana - Practicum | Mostly white | Mostly white | Pleasant but could |
| 1: | | | not fit in |
| Sana - Practicum | Mostly white and | Diverse | Inclusive |
| 2: | young | | |
| Nadia - Practicum | Mostly white | Diverse | Inclusive |
| 1: | | | |
| Nadia - Practicum | Diverse | Diverse | Very inclusive |
| 2: | | | |

Diversity and Racial Climate

As I listened to the experiences of my interviewees, I found that there was a strong relationship between predisposition to diversity of the teachers and the creation of inclusive environments in schools. Table 4 above shows how each participant perceived the diversity in each school and their environments. Amna's practicum experiences in two schools included diverse student populations in terms of ethnicities and cultures. The staff varied in terms of diversity with the first placement being more racially diverse than the second. The overall atmosphere or feeling towards diversity was negative in both places but less so in the first school with racially diverse teachers. Amna was placed in a middle school for her first placement. The school was quite diverse in that more than fifty percent of the population came from a South Asian and Muslim background. The staff was also racially diverse. Despite the diversity amongst students and staff, Amna noted that there were no accommodations for religious needs. She approached the principal about prayer space as that was of main concern to her about her Muslim students because many of them were of age at which they should be observing their daily prayers. Amna felt that she was brushed off and did not accomplish an accommodation for prayer:

I actually went to the principal to talk to her about this. I asked her "oh well do they have the opportunity to pray?" And she's like "Yes but there's no designated area for them to pray in and if they want to pray then they can go to the cafeteria" and that's it. There's no special time or letter sent home to the parents that your child has the opportunity to pray or anything. It's, and by the way, she was telling me that "yeah we really do want to incorporate that kind of things in our school

and blah blah, blah," but it was all just talk. Like you know when you talk to someone that's of that religion you want to please them by saying those kinds of things, it's just talk, so I don't know.

Amna was also unhappy with how little her associate teacher understood about Muslims even though he was in a setting with a large number of Muslim students. Through observation of him with the students and through personal interaction, Amna realized that he cannot effectively accommodate the needs of his Muslim students because he was not fully aware of cultural differences. Amna related the following scenarios about her associate teacher:

Okay umm well both of my teachers were really welcoming, but then my first teacher was a male. First thing was the handshake, that's a problem for me, I don't like doing that. He doesn't understand the background, the [inter-gender] boundaries, the cultural... he doesn't understand that at all. At the end, at the last day, oh my god, this was really embarrassing, he came and gave me a hug. I froze, I was like oh my god; I don't know what to do right? Like he just came and he just "aww I'll miss you" kind of thing. He didn't understand... what a Muslim woman is or what Islam is about. He had no idea whatsoever... Even the hijabi girl that he has (as a student) he has no idea about her culture or background.

Amna felt very strongly about any sort of physical interaction with males; however, she did not explain her position to him. She felt she could not explain anything to him for fear of offending him or jeopardizing her practicum. This presented an interesting dilemma; as a student teacher Amna felt powerless in her relationship with authority.

Amna felt silenced and thought it better to stay quiet than to put herself into an even more difficult position than what she already felt:

As a student teacher you have to be so careful of what you say, you're worried about what he is going to mark you as, and you don't want to interfere in those kinds of matters. Like if he was anyone else I'd be like excuse me like so and so and explain it to him but in that matter...[I couldn't].

Amna's second placement was in a grade two classroom in a school with a large Muslim population but a predominantly white staff, except one South Asian teacher. Again, Amna felt that her school was exclusive and not very friendly to their racially diverse students. Although Amna had a very positive and loving experience with her students, she felt her associate teacher was racist and angry. Amna recalled an incident when her associate teacher was very exclusive about what kinds of experiences her students were allowed to share in class. Her comments were demeaning towards her grade two students:

...then another time this one girl just come from India and she was learning English. And so she [teacher] was teaching them math and while she was teaching that girl from India who just came, she raised her hand and said "I know another way I learned in India." And she [teacher] was crazy by the way, sometimes she would scream at the kids like crazy. She was like "well we're not in India!" and she was really like you know, lashed out on her for no reason.

Amna also recalled how she felt that the teacher was trying to put down South Asian people through indirect comments:

And then I started noticing instances of racism from her too. Like one day she was like “oh you know I went to this Indian grocery store and you know what...I don't really know half of the things in that store ... but you know the people at the counter they started laughing at me”. I didn't really know what to say to that. I [said] “okay they shouldn't have really done that that's really disrespectful” because she was encountering experiences of hate from the Indians and she knows I'm Indian, [but] you don't tell your student teacher that, those kind of stories.

Amna found it bizarre that her associate teacher shared this story and she wondered about her intentions in sharing her experiences. Given her overall behaviour towards her students and Amna, she could only conclude that her teacher was trying to put her down based on her race.

Amna also felt that her associate teacher's behaviour worsened as Amna's relationship with her students grew stronger. Amna was able to relate to her students and understand their stories in a way that her white associate teacher could not because the students related experiences steeped in culture similar to that of Amna's:

I asked them about their day and ...you know those kids have stories like I did this or you know what my parents said, you know something happened; they would never talk to her [teacher] about that. Like they weren't allowed to talk to her about home, you know share any stories basically.

When asked if she found that the students shared stories that maybe only she could understand as a visible minority, she responded positively with,

“Did you watch this Indian movie?” [laugh] “Did you try biryani...”

Amna's ability to understand her students from a cultural perspective added another dimension to her relationship with them that their Caucasian teacher could not accomplish. Illustrating again, that having a variety of teachers to relate to a diverse student body is important for building a safe and comfortable environment for students.

Aisha was also placed in two schools where there were racially/culturally diverse student bodies. In her first placement, although the teaching staff was also diverse, Aisha still felt that it was not an inclusive place. In fact she felt that her associate teacher was racist:

At the first placement though, I did feel that the teacher I was with was racist...there was never anything I could pick on, it's just you know the way someone makes you feel kind of thing? Like we used to have to do lesson plans and then the teacher would have to comment on the lesson plan and at the end of the lesson...there was a box for suggestions on how you could improve ...and every time I gave it to her she would just sign it. And I did say... "do you have any comments?"; "is there anything I can do?" ...the entire year from I think it was September to December, I never got a single comment, and then on my report I got all c's. So it's kind of like you know, I didn't get any 'a's' nor 'd's' she just gave me like straight c's. So I was just kind of like where's this coming from? And then the second [practicum] I got b's and a's and she told me what I could improve on. It was different ...in that first school it was a very small school, there was one of each grade and the same teachers have been at that school for years. It was just the same group of teachers, they had been working together...

There wasn't that sense of diversity among the staff or there was no mention of inclusiveness or anything like that at that school.

It is an interesting phenomenon when people of colour can feel the racism from another person but then struggle to put it into words or examples. These racial microaggressions, everyday forms of racism, are seemingly insignificant actions or comments that build up over time to make marginalized people feel excluded and oppressed (Essed, 2001). The school also lacked an environment that fostered diversity or accommodated diversity even though they had a racially diverse staff. Aisha seemed to blame this on age and length of time teaching. She indicated that these teachers had been working together for a long time and the school was quite small. She contrasted this to her second placement where the school was bigger, and although the teachers were mostly white, they were also young and new. Aisha felt that their fresh approach to teaching helped them focus more on inclusivity within the classroom and the school:

The second school was a new school, new mentality and everything was fresh, smart boards. Everyone was you know trying to build community, there was more of that TRIBES [community] atmosphere, stuff like that.

Aisha felt that with the newer generation of teachers, they are perhaps more predisposed to diversity and anti-racist education in opposition to older teachers who have not been trained in a culture which tries to place value on racial diversity.

This idea was echoed by Sana when she spoke of her placements in a similar fashion. Although she did not feel anyone was racially hostile, she felt that she could not quite fit in with staff that was older and all Caucasian; however, she did not face the same exclusion when placed with a younger Caucasian staff. Sana also felt that it had to do

with younger generations of teachers being educated for diversity, and who may also be predisposed to diversity growing up in modern urban areas of Ontario:

The staff was all Caucasian too, so I just really didn't relate to anybody and even when they had supply teachers come in they were Caucasian, I'm like "okay". I didn't feel like I could, like I was fitting in but at the same time, I tried and they were really nice to me and stuff. It was a good experience, I learned a lot and I liked it. Just I felt like an outsider. My second placement was in a school and the student body was very diverse, the teachers...most of them were Caucasian but they weren't like, they were the ones that grew up in Toronto... they were also a younger crowd. But then the ones in the other practicum were much older. That was the big difference...I felt more included, I could relate to the students a lot better [in the second placement].

Both Aisha and Sana indicate that teachers who have been exposed to diversity and/or have been educated more recently are more inclusive in their practice and the atmosphere they create in the school.

Nadia also felt that exposure to diversity made Caucasian majority staff more understanding and accommodating. In her first placement, Nadia recalled a majority South Asian student body and some staff diversity with a few Black teachers. She also recalled however, that the teachers were very knowledgeable about the various cultures and the needs of their student population:

The student body was mostly South Asian in Brampton so it was funny, I wasn't expecting it. It was my very first time going to a school in Canada and you see just people same skin colour and speaking same language, so it was good. I didn't

find too many teachers of the same race there. They were mostly white, very few Black... the teachers were very accommodating and they knew the culture of those kids because there were so many... the parents there were also very involved, volunteering all the time in the school. So the teachers were very aware of the culture and the need of such students. So in that way I was really surprised, the way the teachers were approaching things. For example ... it was November and kids were preparing for the winter concert that they have in December. And she knew that religiously, some kids or some parents would not want their kids to participate...she mentioned this thing in the classroom that it's okay if you don't want to participate but you have to bring consent form from your parents... So you know I was really impressed.

Nadia found her second placement teacher even more accommodating as the student body and the staff was quite diverse. Again, she felt the exposure to diversity added to their knowledge, making them more understanding of various populations.

Yes even the teachers were diverse and she [associate teacher] herself was very aware of different cultures, different religions ... she was very respectful of others' needs too. That's why when she was telling me about things, she said that "tomorrow's your first lesson and I would say that you actually talk about yourself before doing a lesson so they understand who am I." And she said "there's no harm if you can even talk about your niqab and you will be doing it, taking them out to the gym, or in the break time, or supervisions, you'll be doing it outside the classroom so it's good if you can speak about it." So she actually gave me the idea and I did it and there were many questions from the kids that came up

about my hijab and niqab and everything. After that there was never a question that came up so I think it was a very good idea to make things clear on the very first day.

Nadia enjoyed the open inclusion of diversity in her second placement. She was pleasantly surprised by the opportunity to explain her religious practice and clear up any misunderstandings from the first day. Creating safe and inclusive space in a public school is an important task for teachers so that all of their students feel welcomed.

Participants felt most welcomed in schools that had teaching staff who were more diverse or who were young enough to have been exposed to diversity education during their university careers.

Interaction with Students and Parents

Amna's interaction with her students was different from what she experienced with the staff. Amna received a very positive reaction from her students in both places which had very diverse student bodies with sizable Muslim populations. There were no teachers or staff members with headscarves, so that made Amna the only adult who was a visible Muslim. Amna described the reaction of one Muslim student as follows:

Okay so when I walked into my grade 6 classroom, there was already a hijabi girl in my class. She seemed so happy, I could tell she lit up because... there's a hijabi teacher in this school. Every school I went to and even as I was growing up, I didn't see any hijabi teachers. So anyway, she walked in and you could tell she got happy to see that, so that was a positive thing.

Amna described a similar experience at her second placement:

And then my other placement actually had two girls that wore hijab and they were only in grade 2, and they actually wore hijab and the parents were all hijabi. It was a whole Muslim school and all the grades had 50 % Muslim kids in the class which was really, it was interesting. I also had positive experience with that. The kids were really attached, were attracted to me because of the hijab...when you see someone like you, especially when you're younger, you're like she's similar to us right? You can connect to kids.

Aisha had a very positive experience with her students in a similar way as Amna. Her Muslim students were excited to see her and felt that they could relate to her. Aisha described how excited one young girl became with the idea of becoming a teacher when she saw Aisha, with a headscarf, walk into the classroom as a student teacher:

There was this one student who was so excited "you're a teacher, can I be a teacher too?" She was so excited to see that this hijabi person was her teacher. And I had taught her at the mosque a long time ago as well but she didn't really remember me, but her mom remembered me and just for them, seeing me there was like a positive experience.

This experience stresses how important it is for young children to see “people like them” in positive and successful roles. Without this sort of representation, children will internalize the idea that perhaps they cannot become successful or try for those types of roles. Unfortunately, in the media, Muslims are often depicted as immigrants, unsuccessful and troubled. Students may internalize such definitions of themselves and limit what they do to break out of such stereotypes (Dei, 1997).

Nadia also shared some of the positive reactions she found amongst her students during her placements. Although most of their reaction was curiosity, she also found some children relating to her because their mothers also veiled their faces:

Few girls came and she said "oh my mom does that too!" you know they were Arab girls.

Nadia found her most positive experiences however with the parents. She was able to relate to the mostly immigrant population of parents in both placements and teach her associate teacher how to deal with their needs. She was a cultural translator of sorts as well as a language translator during parent teacher interviews:

Actually I was more of a help to my teacher that way because the kind of questions the parents of South Asian kids would ask, I could relate to them more than she could. It was progress reports, the November one, and she was like "I don't understand why they are so concerned about the 'a's and 'a +' and 'b' is not satisfying them." I said "Where we come from in India, Pakistan all these countries, parents don't settle for less than an 'a' and why 'b' is not an okay grade for them."

She described a similar situation during her second practicum:

Once I think there was a parent who could not speak English very well and she was Urdu speaking. So she [associate teacher] said if I could talk to her so once I did that for her and she was very thankful for that. So I spoke to her and even that mother was really relieved and she could really open up. She had many issues with the teacher at that time but she wasn't able to explain things and even my

teacher was not able to communicate with her [about] what her child was doing...

So [I] was a big help.

Nadia was an asset during her placements because she helped parents and teachers gain a deeper understanding of each other and she helped create an awareness of the needs of immigrant children in the school system. Language and cultural barriers can impede communication so having someone who can navigate through various cultures and languages make schools more inclusive and accommodating places. This value should be something that teacher's colleges can consider when they are educating the next generation of teachers for the growing multicultural school settings of Ontario.

The stories of these women illustrate a unique perspective on Canadian B.Ed. programs in Ontario. Ontario is a place of growing diversity as it one of the target destinations of immigrant settlement. In particular, the Muslim population is quite significant and growing (Nagra, 2011). It is within this context that the participants of this study discuss their experiences regarding diversity and Islamophobia in their lives and during the B.Ed. program. Although the intent of this study was never to assess various B.Ed. programs; hearing the stories of these women allows us to gain a deeper understanding of how minority people experience teacher education and discuss further implications and recommendations for B.Ed. programs. I discuss some of these implications in the next chapter along with how the themes from this study connect to each other and relate to existing literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

I embarked on this study with the purpose of exploring the experiences of Muslim women as teacher candidates in Ontario based B.Ed. programs. Ontario is home to a growing Muslim population, as well as other visible minorities. Consequently, I felt it was important to look at how a Muslim minority population experiences teacher education institutions from an anti-racist perspective. I felt this study even more pertinent considering the atmosphere of Islamophobia that seems to pervade the West through media and political policies (Amin-Khan, 2012; Mogadime et al., 2011; Razack, 2008). I wanted this study to explore how Islamophobia may affect my participants in their journeys towards becoming teachers. Also, as I conducted my literature review, I found that universities are aware of many anti-racist policies as well as how racism affects minority populations. In light of this, I wanted to see how minority candidates perceive anti-racist practice in teacher education. I advanced my study by interviewing four Muslim women who had recently completed their teacher education in Ontario. The data from the interview confirmed much of what I found in my literature review in addition to offering information for further discussion in the field of education. In the rest of this chapter, I briefly review the structure of my study and then engage in discussion and consider the implications of my data.

In Chapter One, I discussed in detail the purpose of this study and the importance of such a study in our current context. In Chapter One, I also outlined necessary definitions, concepts, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two is a literature review of material related to teacher education, minority teacher candidates, anti-racist education, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF), and Islamophobia. I

found some overarching themes concerning the experiences of teacher candidates of colour and, as expected, many similar themes emerged from the experiences of my Muslim participants. In Chapter Three, I detailed my research methodology put forth by CRT where the voices of the marginalized must be heard as subjects or at the center of the study. Using qualitative research interviews, I focused on creating a dialogue with my participants so that they were the authors of their narratives, which were examined through CRT and CRF. Chapter Four includes the results and analysis of the interview data. Although there was a wealth of data and themes, I limited my discussion to the following categories directly related to teacher candidate experiences as visible Muslim minorities: experiences of racism prior to teacher education, experiencing the B.Ed. program and experiencing the practicum components. In the rest of this chapter, I discuss these categories and specific themes in relation to existing literature and in relation to teacher education practices. I have divided up the rest of the chapter as follows: discussion of results, implications for theory and practice and, finally, implications for future research and practice.

Discussion of Results

The themes that emerged during this study were mostly consistent with the thematic pattern I found in my literature review. I reference this material in addition to other literature as I discuss each theme. The discussion is categorized similarly to Chapter Four. The first category and theme is about the candidates' experiences with race and racism prior to entering the B.Ed. program. The second section focuses on the themes that emerged during their program in university settings which include: university racial climate and student/faculty diversity, accommodation for diversity, silence and

racism, religious diversity and LGBTQ rights in education, and the importance of dialogue. The third section includes themes arising from experiences during the practicum components which include: diversity and racial climate of school settings and positive interactions with students and parents.

Experience with Race and Racism prior to B.Ed. Programs

All of the participants experienced some sort of racism in their lives that affected their perception of their place in Canadian society as minority Muslims. Racist incidences in these women's lives ranged from everyday racial microaggressions, including indirect comments or behaviours from coworkers and strangers, to more direct and even violent interactions (Solorzano et al., 2000). This created a fear of how they will be treated by strangers because of their visible Muslim identity. Their social interactions and/or movements from place to place became coloured with fear and anxiety about how non-Muslim and mainly white strangers will react to them. hooks (1995) describes how travel invokes very different feelings for the marginalized and the poor than it does for the upper class whites who define travel as leisure or adventure. For the marginalized, travelling can be filled with fear and terror of white people who may stop them at any time. hooks (1995) further extends this discussion to even simple travel like from one home to another. I want to include public spaces in this discussion. Travelling through various public spaces and even running errands can sometimes be journeys filled with apprehension. Entering the B.Ed. program added to their anxiety because they were entering a new and unfamiliar environment filled with strangers, leaving them very vulnerable to possible Islamophobic reactions.

Another aspect of these women's racialized experiences was gender. In fact, two of the participants asked why I was not interviewing Muslim men as they had more racist experiences during the B.Ed. program. Amna also described how her professor felt that a bearded Muslim man is at a greater disadvantage when seeking employment as a teacher than any other minority group. This discussion reveals how racist experiences can differ according to gender. This intersection between gender and racism has been termed "gendered racism" by Essed (1991) and has also been discussed by Wing (1997). Zine (2006) and Sensoy (2007) take this discussion further to specify "gendered Orientalism" and how Islamophobic discourses and incidences differ between Muslim men and women. When I examined the stories these women related, I could see that some of their experiences were a form of gendered racism or gendered Islamophobia. For example, the more violent racist episodes in which the women felt threatened or were physically harmed all included white male perpetrators. Perhaps this indicates that not only were the men Islamophobic, but their need to intimidate women came from a place of misogyny. Perhaps the misconception of Muslim women as weak and voiceless (as with gendered Islamophobia) prompted them to pick "easy" victims while they were at the bus stop, on their way home or walking in mall. Interestingly, it seems that the perpetrators did not fear any public backlash for victimizing the women; unfortunately, their assumptions were correct since no one else ever stepped in to support these women. The fact that the perpetrators cursed, stalked and intimidated the women with physical proximity in public and "broad daylight" speaks volumes about our society and racism, as well as "genderism" (Essed, 1991). Teacher candidates' experiences of racism are valuable to anti-racist pedagogy in teacher education. These experiences should be brought to the

centre of anti-racist discussions so that candidates can comprehend racialized power structures in our society and how they impact racialized groups of people.

Racist experiences in the participants' lives made them more empathetic and reflective of anti-racist education, a notion also written about by Solomon (1997) and Kohli (2009). All of the participants were engaged during class times that focused on ethics and diversity. When asked about dealing with racial incidences as teachers in future classrooms, all of them referred back to their ability to empathize with victims of racism because of their personal experiences with injustice. Experiential knowledge is very important to an anti-racist discussion. Having people who are able to share their views and experiences with difference will help other candidates with little knowledge gain a wider view about anti-racist goals. More importantly, having candidates comfortable enough to share their experiences as visible Muslims is essential for others to understand the impact of Islamophobia in Canadian society. Although Islamophobia is relatively a new term sometimes debated in the Western world, the impact of this phobia has been pervasive and harmful for Muslims on political, social, personal and economic levels (Kazemipur, 2012; Razack, 2008). Studying the experiences of Muslims is important to critical race and anti-racist discourse as we enter an era which some erroneously define as "post-racist". Racism has not gone anywhere, it has shifted in focus and how it affects racialized and minority people (Ikuenobe, 2013; Jhally, 1997; Razack, 2008)

Experiences during the B.Ed. Program

In this category, I examine themes specific to teacher education in university or campus settings. I discuss the following themes in detail: university racial climate and

student/faculty diversity, accommodation for diversity, silence and racism, religious diversity and LGBTQ rights in education, and the importance of dialogue.

University racial climate and student/faculty diversity. One theme that emerged in this study was candidate impressions and perceptions about the university racial climate in comparison to racial climates in public or at work. All of the participants indicated that they were pleasantly surprised and/or happy with the accommodating nature of the professors and peers. They used the terms “open minded”, “accepting”, “accommodating” and “interested” when describing their cohorts. This was in contrast to life outside of university where the participants felt that they will not be able to meet success because of entrenched racism/Islamophobia in our socio-economic system (Kazemipur, 2012). This experience indicates that there is a positive influence of diversity and equity policies for visible minorities in university. Various anti-racist initiatives espoused by theorists and scholars in this field are being enacted in all four of the teacher education programs at *some* capacity so that students and professors are encouraged to at least think about various cultures within Ontario. For example, all four programs touched upon ethnic diversity at least once. Three out of the four programs spent some time deconstructing various stereotypes so that equity and diversity could be understood at a deeper level. The problem, however, is that the programs did not seem to offer a comprehensive anti-racist pedagogy. This limited implementation of anti-racist pedagogy has also been recognized in Rezai-Rashti & Solomon’s (2008) study of Canadian teacher education programs. Deconstruction of stereotypes and power structures went as far as the professor’s knowledge, so although some injustices were explored, others concerning Islamophobia were not. Also, the depth of anti-racist

pedagogy varied among classes within the same cohort depending on how comfortable the professors were with such topics. In Amna's example, she had one professor who was very frank about racially-entrenched power structures concerning employment whereas another professor in the same program could not critically analyse a video she showed that perpetuated negative stereotypes about Muslims. The idea of professors being the gatekeepers of anti-racist pedagogy in teacher education has been discussed in literature as an important factor to the success of inclusive practices for diversity (Barrett, Solomon, & Singer, 2009; Daniel, 2009; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Yan, Arthur & Lund, 2009). How professors embrace or resist this pedagogy drastically influences the impact of courses that focus on ethics and diversity. Professors can either break down racist structures to discuss their impact on our society and how teachers can work against them to create equitable classrooms; or professors can perpetuate stereotypes and an oppressive hidden curriculum that will leave teachers without the critical language or the tools to enact equitable teaching practices (Barrett et al., 2009; Daniel, 2009).

In terms of the diversity of the faculty and the student body, all four programs were mainly mono-cultural. Despite the growing diversity of Ontario's populations, teacher education programs are still dominated by mostly white candidates and white professors. One candidate felt that she was a token visible minority. She felt that the university was merely trying to diversify minimally to meet some sort of standard for themselves, regardless of what the reality may have been, this was her perception about her place in the program. Implementing anti-racist education in a majority white setting can lead to resistance on part of both the professors and students (Barrett et al., 2009; Daniel, 2009; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Pollock, Deckman, Mira & Shalaby, 2010;

Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell, 2005). The aforementioned studies also point out that for successful anti-racist pedagogy, candidates have to reflect on racialized experiences and develop a personal attitude of social justice. This sort of personal development would take quite a bit of time which present B.Ed. programs do not have (Mills & Ballantyne, 2009). All four candidates, when asked about their courses and overall program, stated that the programs were intense and required a lot of work, not leaving time for additional course work or reflection. Diversifying the cohorts however, and bringing minority voices to the center will allow for further exploration of racism and anti-racist initiatives within curricular and time constraints of teacher education (Daniel, 2009).

Accommodations for diversity. The need for accommodations varied amongst the participants. Depending on interpretations of religion and culture, each participant approached accommodation differently. It was important for all of the participants to meet the requirements of the B.Ed. program while maintaining their identities as Muslim women. The five daily prayers was a topic that came up with all of the participants. One of the participants found it simpler to put aside her daily needs to pray and combine her prayers at home. Another found it easier to pray wherever there was a private space. Neither of these students asked for any accommodations regarding time or space to complete their daily rituals. Amna on the other hand had no problem with approaching her program coordinator, along with her friends, about prayer time and space. Although she was not completely satisfied with the results, she had ensured that she would be able to pray every day as necessary. Nadia was pleasantly surprised by her professor approaching her and asking her about her need to pray. Nadia was so appreciative of her

gesture that she felt she could ask for further accommodations concerning her religious and cultural needs once she realized how open her professor was to diversity. I did not find any mention specific to accommodation of prayer space within teacher education institutions in current literature. Multi-rooms and prayer spaces are readily available on most university campuses but considering that many teacher education classes took place off-site, there was a lack of accommodation in this area for teacher candidates.

In addition to prayer, Nadia felt she needed accommodations for gym and music class. Nadia comes from a culture that includes gender segregated sports as part of their values for modesty. Nadia found it difficult to participate in a gym class during the B.Ed. program in which both men and women participated and played together. Similar attitudes towards coed gym classes were found amongst young Muslim women in a study from England and Denmark (Benn & Pfister, 2013). This particular study noted that there were a range of attitudes among Muslim girls from discarding Muslim clothing and full participation to not participating at all regardless of segregated classes. Culture and religion influences the choices Muslim women make to participate or not. Nadia was not averse to participating in gym activities; however, she was constricted by her religious dress and regulations for modest behaviour. There are additional studies that discuss experiences of Muslim girls/women involved in gym/sports classes in the Western schools and all of them point out the need to accommodate for dress and segregation for the purposes of keeping them involved in active lifestyles (Dagkas, Benn & Jawad, 2011; Dagkas, Koushkie Jahromi & Talbot 2011; De Knop, Theeboom, Wittock & De Martelaer, 1996; Kleindienst-Cachay, 2011; Knez, Macdonald & Abbott, 2012).

Music is another area that Nadia found difficult for participation because of her belief in music as a sinful pastime. To complicate the issue further are the associations with music such as inappropriate gender interaction through dance or listening to music with suggestive lyrics. Some students may not be opposed to music itself, but may be opposed to dancing with the opposite gender or listening to songs that are sexually suggestive (Izsak, 2013). There is some literature available on music education and Muslim students that outline various accommodations a music teacher can make without compromising the curricular expectations (Izsak, 2013).

Racism and silence in the B.Ed. program. Although none of the participants related any specific racist incident from their professors or peers, two of them related specific stories of media-related Islamophobia infiltrating classroom discussion during which professors could/would not deconstruct the racist underpinnings of the discourse. The first aspect of these incidences that I want to discuss is the importance of not-essentializing Muslim identity. Amina felt that the video shown in her class depicted a very stereotypical and negative view of veiled Muslim women. Spirituality is in fact a very personal and organic development. Although there are visible symbols of faith, my participants demonstrate how judgements based just on visible symbols is a faulty practice. Even the process of veiling differed among the participants. Aisha for example had taken on the veil as habit from childhood and spending a lot of time at the mosque with her father. Amna and Sana both made a choice to cover with a headscarf during their undergraduate years as a move towards a greater sense of religiosity. For Amna, however, a headscarf had greater value in terms of religiosity than it did for Sana. When speaking of increasing her sense of spirituality and religion, Amna would also include

covering/veiling in the same sentence, whereas covering was a small step for Sana after she had achieved a greater sense of affinity to her faith. Nadia's choices about covering changed over time and location. Although starting off as a more cultural practice in Pakistan, veiling both the hair and face became a strong part of her identity formation as a foreigner in Canada. These stories about veiling and spirituality illustrate the range of choices and reasoning behind headscarves and niqab among Muslim women. Killian (2003) explores veiling among diverse groups of Muslim women as does Zine (2006). Both provide explanations of how the practice of veiling can mean different things to Muslim women. Teaching anti-racist pedagogy in teacher education should include an understanding that complex diversity exists among groups and move towards breaking down monolithic stereotypes about Muslims in general when it comes to veiling and the participation of Muslim women/girls in education.

The second aspect to this discussion is the use of inflammatory terms or phrases during class. In Nadia's narrative, she discusses how her professor's use of the word terrorist created a negative reference to Muslims. Although the professor did not name Muslims as terrorists, the professor and the students used words and phrases from the media that defined both Muslims and terrorists as a threat to the Western world. Media has an incredible role in defining various phenomena and language (Amin-Khan, 2012; Mogadime et al., 2011). With media bombarding people with messages of Muslims being equal to terrorists, anti-democracy, anti- freedom, anti-peace and so on, these words used by the professor condemned Muslims indirectly. Perhaps her silence on the word "Muslims" made it worse. Opening up the discussion on what it means to be Muslim versus a terrorist would have been more helpful. Not all professors, however, are

comfortable with this topic and they may feel they do not have the knowledge required to lead such a discussion. This serves as an indicator that perhaps universities should look at diversifying their teacher training staff and invite experiential knowledge so that these important discussions can take place. Furthermore, Solorzano (1997) argues that without experiential knowledge of racism, many white people are oblivious to racial microaggressions that can infiltrate educational institutions.

Another factor that hinders anti-racist education is silence on part of the teacher candidates. Although literature exists about silence on part of white and visible minority candidates, I was still surprised at how pervasive silence was in the experiences of all the participants. Silence on the part of visible minority teacher candidates can stem from a structure of oppression in the classroom or from a motive to resist what is being taught in class (Housee, 2010). For the participants of this study, their silence affirmed the aforementioned statements in addition to revealing that lack of critical language also hinders candidates from participating and articulating their thoughts and experiences. Reoccurring silence on part of the participants during sensitive or racial incidences in class thwarted moments that could have been transformational and conducive to anti-racist discussion. Nadia, for example, felt too nervous to voice her feelings and thoughts during a discussion about terrorists and their identity. Although she felt strongly about opposing how media represents Muslims and terrorists as the same group of people, she could not bring herself to speak in class. She felt afraid of how her emotional and angry state would be interpreted by the others. That class discussion could have been a rich moment of analysis if Nadia had spoken up and gotten others to think about what they are

saying. Housee (2012) and Berry (2009) have written extensively on this type of silence in teacher education.

In contrast, Sana presented a different type of silence. She was angry about her role as the spokesperson for Muslims in her cohort. Although she acknowledged that the professor was coming from a respectful place and he was trying to acknowledge the power of experience in classroom discussions, Sana also felt that they wanted to hear only “black and white” answers from her that affirmed what they already believed about racism. This phenomenon has also been recorded in literature concerning teacher education (Abdurraqib, 2009; Razack, 1998; Solomon, 1997).

Amna also kept silent in her program when she felt that Islam and Muslims were being misrepresented by a video her professor played in class. Her silence also stemmed from a place of oppression. Amna, however, also named lack of eloquence or language as a hindrance to her participation. She explicitly described how her lack of confidence in her own eloquence or ability to explain her opinions prevented her from participating, whereas her Muslim peer had the “toughness” and “she was good at explaining things” so she would speak up against Islamophobic ideas. Amna highlights an important aspect of anti-racist education. Students in class must be introduced to the language and theory needed to critically assess information from an anti-racist lens so that they feel confident enough to articulate their experiences and opinions in a coherent and applicable manner. This process of conscientizing marginalized subjects so that they are able to apply their thinking to a theoretical framework has been discussed at length by Paulo Freire (1972), hooks (1994) and Oaklie (2005).

Religious diversity and LGBTQ rights in teacher education. Another area professors and instructors must be knowledgeable about are the differences and tensions versus the commonalities between marginalized groups. It would be a superficial discussion about diversity and equity if I assume that all minority groups can ally themselves based on their common experiences of being marginalized. Examining the friction between Muslim and LGBTQ groups in education is an area that highlights possible tensions between marginalized groups. Highlighting these oppositions and conflicts is not for divisive purposes, but rather I want to bring attention to the reality of diversity in a Canadian context. Exploring tensions may not be a comfortable exercise, but it is a step towards important dialogue and commitment to greater values of respect and equity. Although Canadian education is strictly secular, ignoring various voices in our diverse society would only maintain pre-existing tensions. If I presume that equity and respect are grounding pillars of secular education, then tensions can still be acknowledged without compromising ethics in education. In fact, such an acknowledgment will lead to discussions of how diversity can work within a context of conflicting values, which is a reality that cannot be ignored. Philosophically, Sana and Nadia were unable to extend the theory of equity to LGBTQ groups regardless of their common struggles against prejudice. Sana's dialogue was more about her fear of having to defend her religious stance, rather than a self-reflection of her views. Nadia, however, seemed to be engaged with a more theoretical debate about religion and LGBTQ rights in society. In practicality though, both Sana and Nadia were able to encompass LGBTQ groups in their beliefs about respect and the right to live without fear of violence. Although both participants shared a discomfort in discussing gay rights from a

theological point of view, both agreed that LGBTQ students and students from same-sex parents should be free from bullying, violence and mistreatment. Valentine and Waite (2012) similarly discuss the difference between everyday encounters between heterosexual people of faith and LGBTQ people and the expected tension between religion and sexual orientation. Their study in England found that despite theological and philosophical differences between religion and LGBTQ orientations, people of faith were able to choose to interact with gay individuals with an “ethic of care” rather than condemnation (Valentine & Waite, 2012). Nadia’s example with her student from a same-sex couple illustrates how differences and competing values can be put aside when the focus of the interaction is equity, care and respect. Teacher education upholds the values of equity, care and respect and it is within this context that the topic of religion and sexual orientation can be discussed. In such an environment, teachers like Sana and Nadia can safely explore possible tensions and solutions so that their practice as teachers in a diverse society is not compromised. As universities are purposely diversifying, they also have to push the limits on multiculturalism if they are to fully include diversity in any meaningful manner.

I also have to reflect on my role in these conversations with my participants to uphold the integrity of my research. I came to these interviews as a visible Muslim with a headscarf. My physical appearance automatically opened up discussions that may not have taken place with a non-Muslim or a white person, a phenomenon documented in previous literature (Creswell, 2002). I was not prepared to enter a deeper discussion when two of my participants brought up this particular topic. Entering into a deeper discussion meant I may have to enter into a theological debate which I desisted because I

am not knowledgeable enough about religious texts to do so. I found myself listening to their thoughts without further questioning or prompting them, thus discontinuing the topic. My own discomfort with discussing tensions between religion and sexual orientation stunted an area of the study that could be important for teacher education. If anything, I think this area of the study illustrates how tensions can be negotiated for equitable ends between various groups of people. I also think this research points out an area of study that can take place outside of divisive politics. As long as grounding values of equity and care are kept at the forefront, competing values in education can be discussed in a spirit of equitable practice rather than exclusion (Valentine & Waite, 2012). In fact this idea can also be extended to discussions about racism. Ultimately, teachers entering into the profession have to be able to keep their practice equitable and ethical regardless of conflicting personal views.

Practicum Experiences

The third category of themes emerged from experiences during the practicums at various public schools in Ontario. Two areas I discuss are diversity and school settings and parent/student relationships with minority teacher candidates.

One theme that emerged was that diverse and younger teaching staff, which had some experience in anti-racist education or experience living in metropolitan areas, were more apt at creating inclusive spaces versus older white teachers who perhaps did not experience diversity training or diversity in their communities. Regardless of how diverse or homogenous student populations were, predisposition of teachers' towards diversity and anti-racist education had the most impact on how welcomed the candidates felt at their placements and how welcoming the school was to the diversity in their

classrooms. This experience points out that teachers' personalities and attitudes towards anti-racist education are critical to successful implementation in teacher education programs (Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Unruh & McCord, 2010). Also, although Rezai-Rashti and Solomon (2008) express disappointment in how teachers understand and practice anti-racist education, I think this study shows that we are moving in the right direction. We have not reached the goals of anti-racist education; however, the fact that the newly trained teachers seemed more aware and accommodative speaks to how teacher education institutions impart knowledge about equity and justice. I think it shows that even if they understand just a little, that little bit improves the inclusive atmosphere of schools greatly.

The second theme illustrated the positive relationships between visible minority candidates and minority students and parents. Three of the four participants explicitly narrated events when positive relationships were formed between themselves and students of colour and how helpful they were to the class atmosphere and parental involvement. Solomon (1997) discusses the importance of visible minorities taking on roles of "role modelling and representation" in teacher education and teaching. He outlines how teachers of colour can positively impact students of colour as they see themselves represented in positive roles. Aisha's experience with her student during her practicum best illustrates this idea when the young Muslim girl upon seeing Aisha, in a headscarf, realized that she too could grow up to become a teacher. All of the participants in this study noted that they did not see visible Muslim teachers during their practicum and that made them feel insecure about finding employment after graduation. In turn, students are not used to seeing visible Muslim teachers, explaining why Aisha

received a big welcome from this young girl. Amna found that she was able to form a positive relationship with her students of colour and create a positive and inclusive classroom environment with more ease than her white associate teacher, whom Amna labelled as racist. Amna had the upper hand during her practicum because her school was a South Asian and Muslim majority. Amna could easily connect with students and parents because of her own cultural background and visibility as Muslim. Nadia, in addition to positive interactions with her students, went even further in creating a more inclusive and positive relationship between immigrant parents and the school where she was placed. Using her cultural and linguistic understanding, Nadia became both a linguistic and cultural interpreter for her teachers as well as for the parents, so that both sides could understand each other better. This is an important aspect that racially diverse teachers bring to school settings (Nguyen, 2012). The need for diverse teacher candidates and teachers has been recognized by various teacher education institutions as they are purposefully trying to recruit a more diverse community of candidates (Gambhir et al., 2008). There needs to be a greater push and continued efforts in this area of diversification.

Implications for Theory and Practice

In this section, I explore the implications of my research for theory and practice concerning teacher education. The implications I discuss include anti-racist education and experiential knowledge, accommodation for diversity, and breaking silences and encouraging dialogue.

Anti-racist Education and Experiential Knowledge

Anti-racist education in teacher education programs is still lacking in various areas (Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008). In my literature review, I discuss how diversity and anti-racism can be included in teacher education. My literature review included suggestions of breaking down the hidden curriculum, diversifying cohorts, encouraging narratives and discussions about racism, and having instructors who are willing to engage in inclusive and anti-racist practices/discussions (Daniel, 2009; Escayg, 2010; James, 2000; Knight, 2002; Mitton-Kukner, Nelson & Desrochers, 2010). Through exploring the experiences of my participants, I found that diversifying the teacher education program and including experiential knowledge from professors and students seemed the most pressing, although not exhaustive, recommendations.

As illustrated in my discussion, if professors are to act as gatekeepers of anti-racist pedagogy, then teacher education programs need to assess how well-equipped professors are to handle sensitive topics about race. Part of this assessment should be the monoculture of faculty and the student body that still persists even in diverse areas such as the GTA. As was the case for my participants, other studies confirm that teacher education institutions are still predominantly white, hence, there is limited experiential knowledge in the program (Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008). In addition, discussions of race and justice are still limited to superficial colour blind pedagogy or celebratory multiculturalism (Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008; Solomon, 1996). The approach to Aisha's program is an example of celebratory multiculturalism. Throughout the program, students shared cultural artifacts and contributed positively to a multicultural mosaic that was celebrated and welcoming of differences. I agree that multiculturalism is an important mode of sharing differences in a positive manner. However, the deeper and

darker issues of diversity and marginalization were largely ignored. Although Aisha was thrilled with the multicultural environment of her campus, even she understood that this celebratory experience of diversity is not the same as experiences outside of the program. People generally do not want to discuss how it feels to be hated because of their skin colour or religion in a closed room with students, peers or professors. It is too uncomfortable, but so vital because understanding racialized experiences is the first step to changing what is wrong. The problem with teacher education programs limiting themselves to multiculturalism is that newly graduated teachers may walk away believing in meritocracy and not understanding the fact that children of colour are not starting school on a level playing field (Razack, 1998; Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008). Teachers need to be taught how to deal with difficult and controversial issues because those very things impact children and their lives. Teachers have to be ready to answer students and explain various issues (Woolley, 2008). These important discussions may not happen however, if professors themselves are unable to approach injustice in an appropriate manner. In addition to being largely homogenous white faculties, teacher education programs are also hiring teachers on leave from various school boards and contract faculty. This means that more recent research in the field of anti-racist education is not being presented to teacher candidates by more experienced professors (Gambhir et al., 2008).

Professors need to acknowledge the different backgrounds and experiences of teacher candidates because these experiences will impact their teacher identity formation. Although some research already exists in this area, we should look further into how we can use racialized experiences and minority experiences to further understanding of anti-

racist education. Previous exposure to racism makes students more perceptive to anti-racist education; therefore, there needs to be a way to extend that understanding to all groups of people. Perhaps small group discussions within diverse cohorts as with Nadia's example will help white candidates hear firsthand about racism and its effect in our society. This recommendation echoes Daniel's (2009) suggestion in her study calling for a purposeful diversification of teacher candidate cohorts.

Accommodations for Diversity

In terms of accommodations, they did not seem to be so difficult to make in light of the participants' experiences. What this study indicates is for professors to be aware that different needs will arise in different areas within the same minority group. Prayer space and time seemed to be the most common area of accommodation among the participants. Nadia however brought up two more areas of accommodation, music and gym class, which were unique to her cultural/religious lifestyle.

Accommodation for Muslim students in music class has been written about by Izsak (2013). This piece includes suggestions for music instructors. Firstly, it is important to avoid the assumption that all Muslims have the same approach to music. Depending on how religion and culture are interpreted, Muslims will approach the subject in varying manners. Instructors are also encouraged to discuss the educational value of music instruction so that Muslim students opposed to the class will understand the importance of music being more than just a pastime (Izsak, 2013). Alternatively, instructors can offer different types of instruments because religious interpretations also vary depending on types of instruments. Instructors must also understand that sometimes it is not the music itself that students oppose as much as gender interaction or suggestive

lyrics. Simple modifications to the lesson such as changing songs with more subtle lyrics or having students interact without actually holding hands or touching are all appropriate as they accommodate the needs of some students while maintaining the integrity of the music program (Izsak, 2013).

The lack of participation of Muslim women in sports seems to be of greater concern in literature than participation in music (Benn & Pfister, 2013). Some accommodations in gym classes are easily dealt with in terms of allowing Muslim women to remain fully covered rather than enforcing a uniform of t-shirts and shorts. Muslim women can also group themselves with other women for certain gym activities. Segregating the gym class between males and females may be too difficult to accommodate in many settings because of time and spatial constraints; however, professors can think about what is important to them during the B.Ed. program and how much are they willing to accommodate. I personally agree with much of the literature though that it is far more important to have accommodations for Muslim women so that they are not shut out of sports as seems the trend in Western contexts (Benn & Pfister, 2013). By addressing this sort of accommodation in teacher education, teachers can become more sensitive to the needs of their diverse populations in schools. In addition, educators have to understand that the main barriers to physical education and Muslim girls are dress and interaction with boys (Dagkas et al., 2011). Also, disagreement between young girls and their parents about sports and physical activity make this a more sensitive issue for Physical Education teachers. Muslim girls may want to fully participate but may be discouraged from home because of cultural interpretations of girls and their roles in society. Teachers may be put in delicate positions of encouraging a

healthy lifestyle and meeting parental concerns about how the classes are conducted (Benn & Pfister, 2013).

Silence and Dialogue

The interview data revealed reoccurring silence on part of the participants during sensitive or racial incidences in class during their program. Moments that could have been transformational and conducive to critical and anti-racist discussions were inhibited because students with opinions and experiences would not or could not voice their thoughts. Professors/instructors need to find ways to break the silence. For example, Housee (2010) discusses how as a professor she tries to make safe spaces in class so that students are comfortable breaking these silences. An anonymous journal response from the students is one method she has successfully employed when met with silence during class discussions (Housee, 2012). Housee also recognizes the difficulty of breaking the silence and creating space safe enough to put anti-racist theory into practice where students can engage in transforming their own worldviews and consciousness to align with anti-racism and social justice. One method to encourage discussion may be small group discussion in which it may be easier for all students to share their thoughts. It is easier to hold more intimate dialogues within a small group as opposed to a larger setting. Nadia's experience was a good example of this method working to encourage dialogue and creating an understanding between people with different points of views.

Another practical implication is hearing voices outside of the classroom. Housee (2010) discusses students approaching her after class to voice their opinions even though they were too intimidated during class. Amna also indicated that discussion took place outside of the classroom when her professor showed them a video stereotyping Muslims

rather than in class where it may have challenged the professor. Professors have to find a way to tap into these discussions that can be fertile ground for anti-racist education.

Housee (2010) however, acknowledges that having privy to outside discussions may be easier for her because she shares visible minority status with her students, making her more approachable from the students' point of view. This again illustrates the value of having a diverse faculty body. Along with their experiential knowledge, their presence as authority figures offers students of colour unique opportunities to share their experiences and express their thoughts.

Another practical implication of this work is equipping students with the critical language or vocabulary necessary for discussions about race. Housee (2010) and Oaklie (2005) both discuss conscientizing the minority subject, so that they are able to put their experiences and views into a critical race framework. Conscientizing subjects means giving them the tools to effectively explain their experiences and understand them in a larger racial/power structure of society. Professors knowledgeable about the field of anti-racist education would be able to work towards this best as opposed to staff hired from various school boards who may not have theoretical background necessary for such an activity (Gambhir et al., 2008).

When it comes to dealing with race and racism in class, professors also have to understand the impact of racism on people of colour or racialized groups. Racism is more than historical, social or political phenomena; racism has significant emotional and psychological impact on people (Zembylas, Charalambous & Charalambous, 2012). Teacher educators have to recognize the impact before addressing race and racism in class. Professors and teacher educators must also consciously decide how they show

their empathy with different people and what sentiment/issues they want to share or push in class (Housee, 2010; Zembylas et al., 2012).

Implications for Future Research and Practice

I limited this study to female Muslim teacher candidates and their experiences in Ontario based B.Ed. programs. For further research, I think it is important to look at the Muslim male experience so that the effects of gendered Islamophobia can be further understood in the context of education. I also think that examining the experience of Muslim children, both male and female, in Canadian public schools is an important area so that the impact of Islamophobia in schools is fully understood by all involved in the education field. There are numerous studies on teacher candidates exploring whiteness and race in various programs. More studies on how professors themselves feel about anti-racist education would be helpful in understanding why there is resistance on part of some professors to address racialized issues in the classroom.

I assert that continuing studies in race and education are essential in Ontario. This study illustrates how positive changes are being enacted, but it also illustrates areas of improvement. Being in the education system as both an educator and a parent, I know that racism exists among staff members in Ontario schools. Although I cannot enumerate the level of racism in education, as it was not the purpose of this study, I will not deny my personal experiences of overhearing racist conversations in the staffroom or even having to deal with my own children's experiences with racist staff. Despite the wealth of information available about anti-racist education and the push towards diversity training in B.Ed. programs, anti-racist education in practice still has a long way to go before it becomes a lived pedagogy (Rezai-Rashti & Solomon, 2008).

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Please note that your responses to these questions will remain confidential as outlined in the Informed Consent. Confidentiality also implies that the names of schools, staff, professors etc. will be omitted from any research reports/presentations. Please avoid referring to specific institutions and people to protect and respect their privacy and confidentiality.

Please also note that you are not obligated to answer anything you are not comfortable doing so. You may also exercise your right to stop and end your participation at any time.

Background Information

1. Please tell me about yourself and your background.
 - a. How old are you?
 - b. What is your cultural/ethnic background?
2. How does Islam fit into your life? Is Muslim/Islam an important identifier for you?
3. How do you think others perceive your Islamic identity?
4. Did you grow up in a religiously diverse community? Explain.
5. How did being Muslim affect your day to day life before you came into the B.Ed. program? How do you experience it today?
6. How does your gender, class or colour affect your day to day life?
7. How did you come to teaching / why did you become a teacher?
8. Can you recall incidences of racism or discrimination at school from your life that you can describe to me?
 - a. Did the incident have an impact on who you are today?
 - b. Did it impact your teaching identity or how you approach your students?

B.Ed. Program

Profile of Program and personal insights

9. Was your B.Ed. program a concurrent program or a consecutive program?
 - a. What did you think of the length of your program? Could you have used more time or do you feel prepared?

10. Was your B.Ed. program made up of a homogenous or diverse student body?
 - a. Did the make-up of the student body surprise you in any way?
 - b. Did you feel comfortable amongst your peers? Explain.
 - c. Was the faculty diverse or homogenous? Do you think the make-up of the faculty affects the B.Ed. program in any way?

11. Were any diversity/anti-racist courses offered in the program? Did you take such a course? If not, was diversity a theme in various courses?
 - a. Did these courses offer any new knowledge?
 - b. What did you think of the course?
 - c. Did you enjoy the course?
 - d. Were there areas that you thought were missing from the course?
 - e. Did the courses reinforce stereotypes?
 - f. Were these courses instrumental to your practice as a teacher? Explain.
 - g. In light of Muslims in the media do you think addressing Islam and Muslims in schools is important to the B.Ed. program? Was such a topic covered? What did you think about it?

12. Do you think religion should have a place in teacher education institutions? Why?

13. What does religious accommodation mean to you? What do you think it should look like in a teacher education program?

14. In the practicum/program, did you see religion being addressed or religious accommodation being made?

15. What was the attitude of staff and students and peers towards issues of religious accommodations?

16. Did you have any personal accommodation concerns as a Muslim teacher candidate such as prayer space? How did you deal with them?

17. Was there any racist or discriminatory incident in the school/class/curriculum?
Was there a covert incident that others may have failed to notice?
18. Did you at any time feel uncomfortable offering your views or understanding during the program or practicum? What was the context of this incident?

Personal Insights to the practicum

19. What type of communities were your practicums located in: urban, suburban or rural?
- Were your schools and classrooms diverse or homogenous?
 - What made you feel welcome into the school community? Explain.
 - Did anything make you feel out of place or unwelcome? Explain.
20. How did the students in your practicum react to you?
- Can you think of positive reactions to you as a Muslim or visible minority? Explain.
 - Can you recall negative reactions to you as a Muslim or visible minority? Explain.
21. Was the teaching community at your practicum diverse or homogenous? Explain.
22. Do you think your identity affected your relationship with your practicum teacher? How?
23. Can you recall times when your practicum teacher asked you for your feedback on how to approach Muslim students in the classroom? How did you feel about that? Were you able to answer his/her questions?
24. Do you think being Muslim affected the completion of your B.Ed.? How and why? Do you think other factors such as colour, gender or class for example affected you?
25. Do you have any questions?